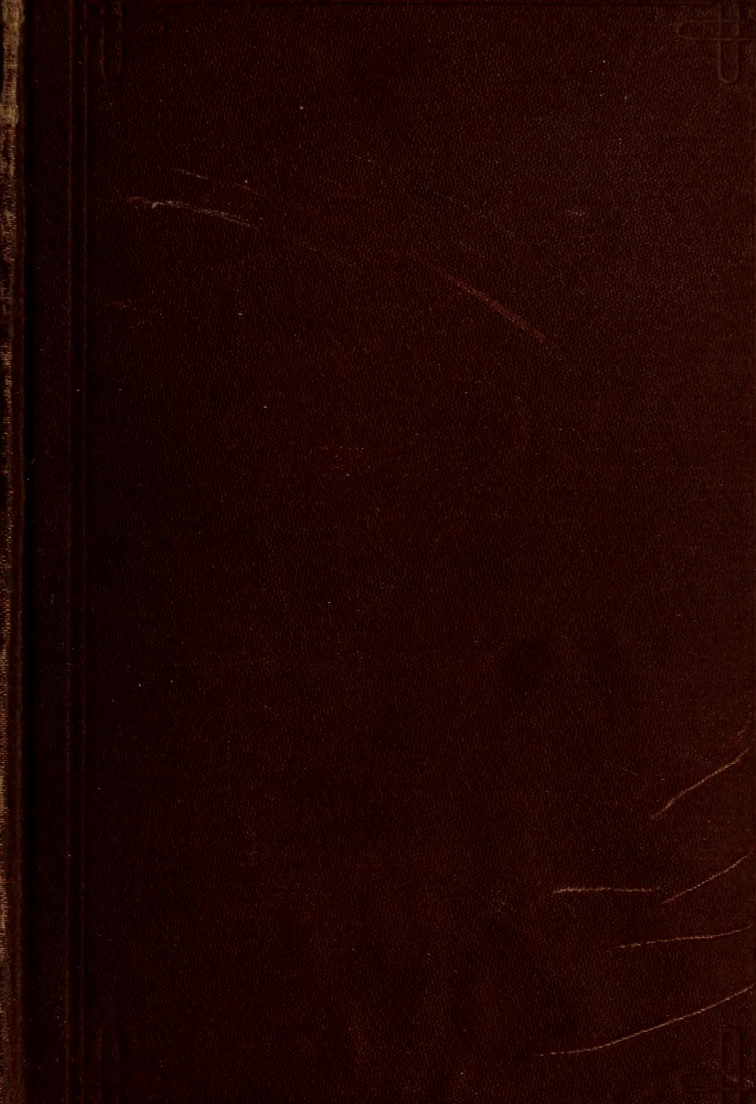
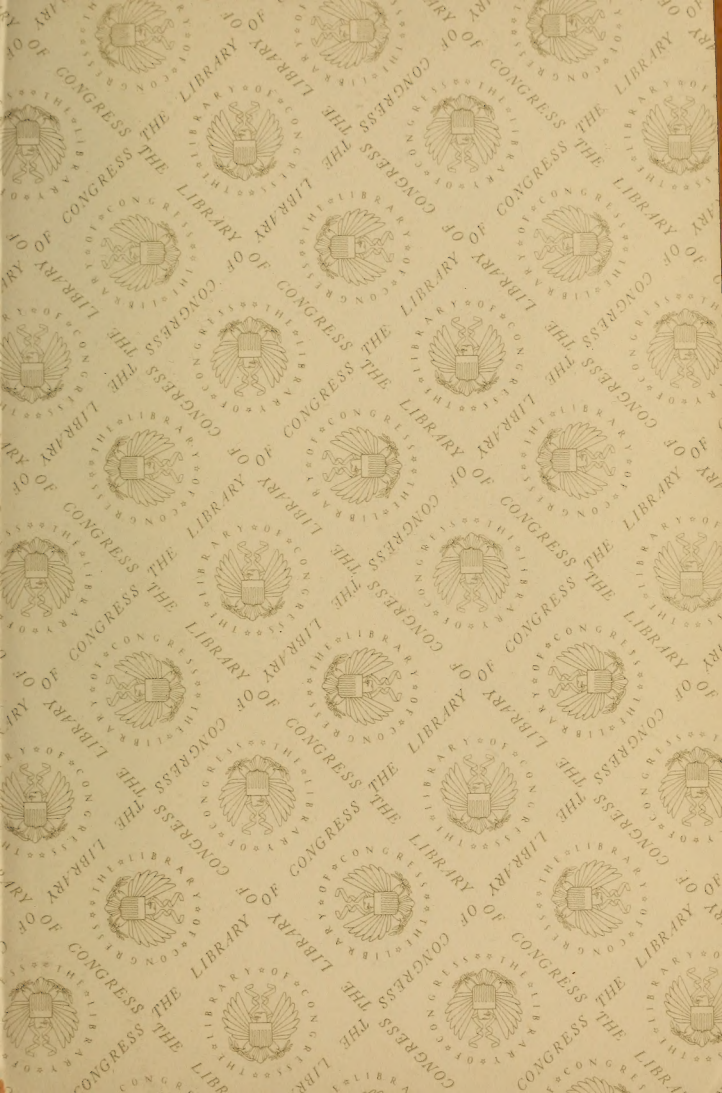
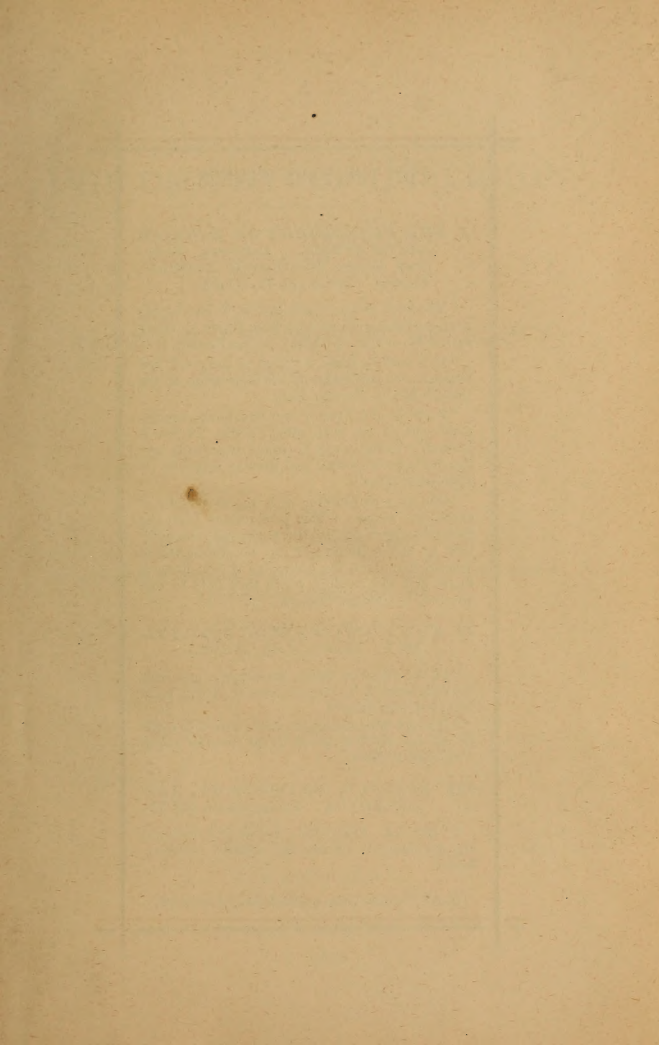










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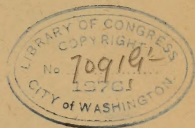
OR THE

RATIONAL GROUNDS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

BY

JOHN BASCOM

AUTHOR OF "PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGY," "PHILOSOPHY OF ENGLISH
LITERATURE," "ÆSTHETICS," ETC.



NEW YORK
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
182 FIFTH AVENUE

1876

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P R E F A C E.

IT is a rare pleasure to one who speaks or writes from conviction to find persons interested in the discussion. When this is denied him, the only sufficient recompense is a firm persuasion of the intrinsic value of the truths uttered, accompanied with the belief that they will sooner or later win attention. In presenting to the public a Philosophy of Religion we sustain our courage by the last consideration. We have quietly estimated our audience, and are so in a measure prepared for the issue. Scientists, confirmed if not arrogant in their own views, will pass our work slightly, as one more of the inexhaustible brood of metaphysics and theology, of any one of which the kindest thing that can be said is, It may as well not have been ; the spent force of an effete method. We have this advantage over them ; we do and shall profit by their labors, and can take the honey from their hive while we escape its stings. It is a lesson they may do well to learn. One can ill afford to be supercilious toward any class of laborious inquirers.

There is a second and larger division of scientific workers from whom we expect more, but not as much as we would be glad to expect. They are those who grasp firmly in the right hand the theories, often the extreme theories of science, evolution and universal, necessary law ; and in the left, certain remnants of religious faith, and

then adopt the motto of charity, that the one hand shall not know what the other hand doeth. They thus leap the chasm, or rather pretend to leap it, which divides the physical from the spiritual world, turn the back on the one field when they enter the other, and are content to declare, that nothing from this quarter does or shall come in conflict with anything in that quarter. The steeds of science and religion are mutually houghed the moment they overpass their prescribed bounds. This is an attitude too illogical, too much one of will, of easy compromise, too little one of pure and unflinching reason, to make us very hopeful. A position whose chief commendation is its comfort is one not easily broken up. Till the deep-seated, radical opposition that really exists between the scientific temper and the truly spiritual temper, between the spirit with which the conclusions of science are constructed into a universe and the spirit which religion expresses, is felt, we shall have little expectation of an earnest effort to close the conflict; of a disposition to lend an attentive ear to a readjustment of claims and a union of conceptions in a harmonious, spiritually vital cosmos.

There is a third, a bolder class, but one enclosed in the pale of faith rather than of science, whose attitude is allied to that of those last mentioned. They accept religious truth with a firm though conventional belief; neither do they doubt the conclusions of science. They take up knowledge in a fragmentary way, and often fall into illogical and contradictory applications of it. They suspect that there are minor conflicts between science and religion, which a few, in a hostile, skeptical spirit, are pushing into the foreground, and so doing a needless mischief, but they have no insight into the settled, fundamental antagonism between the two methods of viewing the world, nor do they at all understand how sweeping in the end

must be the victory of the one or the other of them. They take a superficial view of the events transpiring in the social, scientific and religious fields, watch without fear their great conflicts, and move lightly about in the currents of thought that happen to entangle them. There is not stringency enough in such natures to prepare them either to understand or to relish the earnest and bold handling of truth, especially those truths which pertain to religion—dependent everywhere upon conventional safeguards. They see no need of the bold word, nor do they themselves find any joy in it. It is a disturbance whose mischief is immediate and certain, whose advantages are remote and obscure. Here again we would be glad to hope for more than we dare to expect.

A fourth class, the religionists, will settle us at once with that preordained eye-shot of theirs that admits of neither delay nor mistake, and has made them from the beginning the vicegerents of Heaven. We must condemn ourselves just here still farther by taking some true words from that ill-omened source, Renan. "Sensitive like all powers that claim for themselves a divine source, religions naturally construe as hostility even the most respectful expressions of difference, and see enemies in all who exercise on them the simplest rights of reason."* We regret this hasty antagonism which inquiry calls forth. If the assumption on which it proceeds were true, that the points of faith have been sufficiently and repeatedly settled, we should still regret it, for we remember that the individual must have time and liberty in adopting and using the best conclusions. Yet we think better of the religionists than they ever can of us. We look upon them as often most earnest when most narrow; while they regard us as at once narrow and wicked. Compelled to retire, we do so

* Religious History and Criticism, p. 42.

with the moral advantage of a charity which forbids a harsh judgment.

There is one division in the religious world whom we greatly dislike either to offend or to trouble, those sincere, timid believers who dare not themselves venture, nor can they wish others to venture, beyond the old intrenched lines of faith, lest they should be caught up and spirited away altogether. Their feelings are expressed by Landor: "Be convinced, Mr. Middleton, that you will never supplant the received ideas of God; be no less convinced that the sum of all your labors in this field will be to leave the ground loose beneath you, and he who comes after you will sink."* Because our religious conceptions are slowly changed, we do not therefore deem them incapable of change. Improvement is open to us here as elsewhere, if we have the patience to command it. We can not sympathize with the timidity and distrust which forbid advance lest it should turn into retreat and rout; nor with those who, suspecting that things are not quite right, distrust their and our ability to make them better. We can only say to these our Christian brethren, whom we dearly love, We leave you the camp, we enter on our warfare at our own charges, and are more content to lose life elsewhere than to tarry in a position which in our own thoughts we have surrendered. We ask nothing of you but the charity of your love, nor even this if you can not conscientiously give it.

We hope to gather our attentive readers from those devout yet bold minds who feel that the old must be continually reshaped and made ready for the new; that dogmatism is a stone-wall at best, and can never offer a safe or lasting retreat when its defenders are losing manly ascendancy; that religion is often most fatally betrayed by

* Imaginary Conversations, vol. i, p. 352.

those who stand up most confidently in its defense ; and that under its ostensible ramparts lie mines in a hundred directions whose explosion is sure to engulf many believers. We look for justification to that increasing class who believe that many old questions are to be reopened, that few primary conclusions are ever permanently closed, that reason is to be constantly allowed a freer, bolder, more critical handling of the conditions of faith, that conventional forces should offer no barriers to speculation, that we are always losing faith in losing religious liberty, and that earnest minds should ever commit themselves anew to God and the future, with the lights of the past and the present shining on their pathway.

We wish to believe, we do believe, and to this end we must be left to find the grounds of belief. Nothing so benumbs our faculties and arrests our faith as the words of those who pretend to settle for us conditions ; who offer to us antique propositions, not living experiences. We say nothing of originality in our opinions. When it is present it may do little to commend them. We only say, we walk by this light, we are blessed by it, it is free to all who can use it. We do not pretend that it is divine light in any other sense than that all light is from the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. We can urge no discipleship—alas that the disciple is so often the proselyte—with a *Thus-said-the-Lord*. We trust indeed that he speaks to us by word, work and spiritual insight ; but we know not that this his message to us is exactly that which he is preparing for another. We venture to sow, knowing that the soil is after all the best discriminator between living and dead seed.

The purpose we have hoped to accomplish by this work is a clear pointing out of that in the constitution of the mind which justifies and supports religious faith, the ante-

cedent conditions of philosophy which are essential to the Christian system, the beliefs concerning the soul of man which infold ultimately the fortunes of religion. We would expose the logical tendencies of misbelief and unbelief, and not leave them to fire their mines before we are aware of any danger. We wish not so much to deny as to entirely reverse the statement of Morley. "It has been said that religion is at the cradle of every nation and philosophy at its grave; it is at least true that the cradle of philosophy is the open grave of religion."* Rational life makes way for religious life, and philosophy is the double-leaved door of the Kingdom of Heaven.

We desire to develop the inherent, logical connections of doctrine and doctrine, system and system; and to save and fortify faith by restoring to the light its sufficient and rational grounds in our spiritual nature, in the fundamental facts of our own being. This labor we quietly submit to the uses of those who call for it.

* Rousseau, vol. ii, p. 259.

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INTRODUCTION.

WHAT things may be known, and what may not be known ; in what directions inquiry may be profitably pushed, and in what it should be restrained ; what are the effete, and what are the living methods of investigation, are questions which have never been more warmly discussed than at present, nor have ever received a greater variety of answers. Some of these solutions are of the most extravagant character. A leading daily paper on my table says, "We think the day is coming when it will be generally recognized that careful scientific observation is the most valuable labor performed in the world." The *most* valuable is the assertion ; and this value is affirmed, not of the thought to which observation ministers, but of the skillful search which renders its data. The statement is but the single straw indicating the great current with which our convictions and sentiments are ebbing away from the soul, outward through the senses, toward the physical world ; as if a mastery of this were better than a wise rule of the spirit.

The last issue of a popular science monthly, that lies beside the paper, says, through one of its contributors, "The question, Does space contain a finite number of cubic miles, or an infinite number ? is a perfectly intelli-

gible and reasonable one, which remains to be answered by *experiment*." O happy shade of Plato, separated by two thousand years from such speculation as this !

Nothing seems more to perplex and bewilder the wise men of the present, than the effort to keep apart the several branches and forms of knowledge, and to give to each the value that attaches to it in its own field. A scientific cannibalism, stupid and destructive, has fallen to us. Most of the labor of the past is set down as of little or no value, and impossible and absurd things are promised of mere methods. We are suffering from the first intoxication of science, and are waiting for those deeper draughts that are to sober us again, for the wisdom of disappointment. The departments of thought that have fallen into the most neglect, from this sudden uprising of physical science, are philosophy and theology ; yet these are the departments to which the best sheaves of the new field shall ultimately be returned. We do not in the least regret the diversion. Since the race can not progress symmetrically and uniformly, let it move eccentricly, irregularly, along divergent lines, as it is able. When the speculative thoughts of men shall again turn, as they certainly will turn, to the human soul, and its destinies, it will be with more wisdom, more insight, more faith ; with many another page of exploded promises, checked off from the remaining possibilities of error.

In the mean time, we shall strive to hold fast to the true grounds of knowledge, the philosophy of knowledge, found in the mind itself. It is to the universal instrument and recipient of truth that we look ; it is by an inquiry into its powers that we hope to see the fields of acquisition marked out, and their ultimate value indicated. We are not discouraged by narrow successes. In searching for the foundations of true and sufficient knowledge, we still turn

to the faculties of knowing. Not till these are all recognized and classified, shall we be able to lay down the limits of inquiry, its various forms, the relation of these to each other, the modes of investigation peculiar to each, and their several degrees of authority. This knowledge of the soul itself, so far as it is exact and complete, gives us the principles involved in all knowledge, gives us the philosophy of knowledge. To this inquiry, no matter with how many chimerical results it has been attended, we return, knowing that the least gain here is wealth; that, without this recognition by the mind of what its own constitution makes possible to it, all conclusions are mere surmises, private dogma, the inertia of single minds resting in a favorite attitude. We need hardly say that science, as science, is not only good, but the great, distinguishing good of our time. Nor has it failed to make valuable contributions to philosophy. Its results assume a doubtful, and even disastrous, character only when it attempts, by methods and ideas peculiar to it, to control or displace philosophy. Science is physical in its facts, philosophy is spiritual. This difference must ever divide them, and leave to philosophy an authority, in reference to ultimate truths, which it can never share with science, or delegate to it. The scientific unbelief of our time, outweighs its hereditary, religious belief, in our estimate of influences, not by numerical force, but by intellectual vigor. It commands attention by its large absorption of the mental strength and activity of the age.

Science has been closely identified with observation and induction. But observation must be guided, and the ideas that run before it, that institute inquiry, determine its directions, and classify its results, are those which spring from some deep insight, or fortunate guess, of the mind, some anticipation of the facts not yet disclosed, some

inference that owes its leap forward, and its right to guide, to the secret efficiency of the thoughts evolving it. Thus it is the notion of the equivalence of forces, suggested by a first fact, that has been made the guiding light of inquiry in a hundred others. The facts themselves are not new, but the comprehension of them is, and sprang not from the senses, but from the mind using the senses under its own appropriate, interpreting idea. It is these forerunning thoughts, these apt conceptions, that make observation what it is ; and these are evolved by the sagacity of the mind in obeying its own laws, in accepting and testing its own hints. Mere observation is not fruitful, it is observation made definite in form, and happy in direction, by the forecast of rational powers. The laws of rational insight lie thus at the core of verification, as they are in truth located at the centre of productive observation. Meteorology may be adduced as a field in which many fruitless facts have been collected, because as yet the idea, the law, or its suggestion, has not been hit upon, which is to weave them together, and disclose their bearings. To accumulate observations is blind labor, till some theory is being tested or established by them, or the hint of a theory is being caught from them.

Induction also rests on intuitive, primitive convictions such as this, Like effects accompany like causes ; and is, in every stage of its progress, passing over into deduction. Thus not only the laws of mind, but the logical tests of validity, incident to its various forms of action, are present in all fruitful induction. The question in natural science at present, preëminently interesting, is the origin of species, and the view under warmest discussion, is one of the most sweeping deductions on record. The theory of Darwin, in its peculiar, its expansive features, is exclusively deductive. There has not as yet been induc-

tively established a single coherent series of facts reaching to the length of the desired conclusion, and incapable of another construction. Indeed, extended and decisive and inductive data are very likely impossible to this view. The conclusions of geology are, the larger share of them, deductive ; and as deduction is the stepping of the mind quite beyond the senses, is a free, bold, intellectual stride, we must know the laws of mind thoroughly, if we would justify, in any department of science, its reasonings, and see the final authority of its conclusions.

Lacking this foundation of a sound philosophy, scientists, or rather that small, but very energetic, portion of them that is tinctured with positivism, hold a very anomalous position. In England, the philosophy of the distinctive scientific movement has been transmitted to it chiefly through Locke, Hume, Mill, Spencer, and bears, in its ultimate premises, the most vague, wavering, uncertain aspect. Its skeptical tendency is so complete that it logically taints every conclusion. No system ever rested on more vacillating premises. Positivism, the exaltation of sensational knowledge, a philosophy that would build granite structures of truth on the slippery sands of denial and unbelief, that prepares the way for trusting the perceptions by a distrust of the intuitions of the mind, everywhere colors its conclusions, even when formally rejected by it.

Theological dogma has at least this advantage, that it cultivates faith, a rational repose in the mind itself, and thus provides a coherent, tenacious substructure for its edifice. Positivism starts in sweeping denials, yet wishes to end in a substitution of exact knowledge, so called, for the beliefs which have, up to the present time, underlain the world's creed and practice. This is an effort to evoke creation out of chaos, affirmation out of denial, something

out of nothing, in the intellectual world. Till starting points are better taken, this speculation can be but a cloud driven by the wind. It may spread over a wide territory, and hide much of the heavens, but it can not hold what it wins, nor tarry where it chances to rest.

We insist on the necessity of a sound philosophy, underlying scientific knowledge, if we do not wish this to break its limits, and endanger by crude speculation our best possessions; and we draw attention at two other points to the vague, wavering conclusions of that science which is working its way forward, with such a recognition only of philosophy as favors its own ends. The results of inquiries which lie strictly within the scope of science, do not indeed thereby lose their correctness, but they are sadly crippled and perverted in their relations to human life and well-being. The first point is this, the philosophy of Spencer, that philosophy which has all along sustained the extreme scientific tendency, and is its constant ally, is unable to pronounce itself to be either idealism or materialism; it can determine the being neither of mind nor matter; and shuts itself up to the unsubstantial phenomena that pursue each other in consciousness, the consciousness of the individual. Spencer closes his *First Principles* with these words, "The reasonings contained in the foregoing pages afford no support to either of the antagonist hypotheses respecting the ultimate nature of things. Their implications are no more materialistic than they are spiritualistic, and no more spiritualistic than they are materialistic." The one inadmissible thing is realism. The real in all directions is that which Spencer honors, and then waves off the stage with the appellation, *The Unknowable*.

It is difficult indeed, in such a system to define truth, since there are no abiding realities to which it can be referred. It would seem as if the truths of the physical

world, so called, must, under this view, most of all lose substantial being, as each scientist can only affirm a certain agreement in the impressions and ideas of his own mind, a uniformity of sequence in them, but is unable to put any valid, permanent existence back of them, either of a physical or spiritual nature. He can have no science sustained by the principles of a philosophy held in common with another, since he dares to affirm nothing even of the being of that second mind ; nor of its phenomena ; nor of any common world between it and him. If he thinks and acts as though discussion were real, the parties to it real, and the objects of it substantial, he is accepting practically as authoritative, impressions to which he has refused to yield theoretic credence.

Of what value can the formal relations of mental impressions be, when the very substance of those impressions is unsubstantial ? Of what value is the comparison of conclusions, of facts, theories, systems, when the existence of one and all of the things to which they pertain is an unverified notion ; and the impressions themselves come and go, vapor-like, in the particular consciousness that entertains them ? Science thinks itself busy with an external world, and Spencer thinks himself in controversy with others. But both facts, and all kindred facts, are, and forever must be outside the pale of a philosophy that knows not whether it is materialism or idealism. It would seem as if no truth of any interest were left within it, as if the word, *truth*, were quite lost to it. The fact is, it tacitly avails itself of powers whose being it formally denies, and gives no sufficient basis for its own work, admirable as that work in many departments is. Yet this positive tendency, disparaging the laws of mind, rejecting its insight into causes efficient and final, has worked its way largely into science, and into the philosophy by which advanced

scientists are striving to unite, enlarge, and consolidate their views.

The second difficulty referred to, and one alike gross, appears in the foundations of belief. Hume ascribes belief to the vividness of impressions ; Spencer to their invariableness. The two views are closely allied ; the one is more cautiously taken than the other. In neither case is the mind, by its own activity, discerning the truth, reaching facts or principles by its intuitions, but in both, the mind—though in theory there is no mind—is being made subject to the force, the iteration of its ideas. Belief is a fact of momentum with Hume, and one of inertia with Spencer. The impression that is is ; and the force with which it occupies consciousness, or the pertinacity with which it returns to it, is its measure of power, and this power we call belief. This statement annihilates all difference between the false and the true in belief, except that which is found in the vigor and time of occupancy. In this system not only is possession nine points in law, it would seem to be the entire ten. The belief in a miracle is as good as the denial of it, nay better, if it be more vivid or more pertinacious. With reversed impressions reversed conclusions follow, and the prevailing opinion is the true opinion, as truth and prevalence are different expressions for the same thing. Thus belief rests on the same basis as physical tastes. The enjoyment of food is the final fact that proves our relish for it. For one to urge the details of his appetites, his culinary opinions, on another is impertinence ; for it is the fact of vivid, agreeable impressions in himself, and this only, that each pronounces upon. Discordant facts, like those of gustatory sensations, can find **no** grounds of change in argument ; nor can they afford any interest in statement. If a belief is altered by proof as proof, it is so in the face of this philosophy ; since belief

merely expresses the fact of the predominant occupation of consciousness by an idea; and this fact as a fact meets no contradiction in an argument. Forgetfulness is the true subversive agency. A belief may be displaced, but not refuted; and the new belief has no better intellectual foundation than the old one. Sluggishness is the mordant of opinion.

Hume frankly accepted these conclusions, and so made his philosophy to be one of systematic skepticism. No better foundation would seem to underlie the science affiliated directly or indirectly with positivism—a word which should mean positive in the most narrow and dogmatic way.

We instance these fundamental weaknesses in the extreme, yet most fruitful scientific spirit of our time, not by way of criticism, but to show that we can here find no sufficient guidance to philosophy, and that we must search elsewhere for those principles of knowledge which give us the limits of inquiry. Missing these, we may make minor gains, but shall suffer we know not what losses, as unbelief works its way among the spiritual truths of our being.

We shall speak of the philosophy of Spencer as materialistic, not because we wish to employ a word of reproach, but because we wish to express clearly, what we regard as the latent sympathies of his doctrines. These are materialistic in the most important respects. The germ and norm of all growth, are found by him in material phenomena. It is material laws that shape events; physical forces, that with necessary, unimpeded development unfold and unfold the universe in all its phases. Necessity, the transition or flow of indestructible forces, complete in themselves, these are the distinguishing features of the material world, and a philosophy that contemplates phenomena as shaped by these only is, in a most important sense, materialistic, since it breaks down the division

between the powers of matter and mind, in favor of matter. It is material laws, and these only, that it deals with ; though it affirms nothing of the substratum of being from which they spring.

If philosophy sustains science, even more obviously does it religion. It is to the philosophy of religion, or the foundations of religious belief in mental science, that our attention is to be directed. The very facts on whose existence religion depends, the objects toward which it is directed, turn for their proof of being on the joint intuitive and reflective processes of the soul, and till these are defined and accepted, those can not be established. Science directs its inquiries to facts which are reached by the senses. Men follow their senses, complex and spiritual in their action though they be, in spite of their philosophy. Theory has never been able so to give the lie to these first activities of the soul as to destroy our trust in them. Amid all conflicts of authority, the senses, no matter what their theoretical estimate may be, are sure to win a practical victory. Science not only unites itself to these first and most vivid inlets of knowledge, its results are often immediately and physically serviceable, so that it makes a second bid to the appetites, passions, desires. Science is thus closely united to the superficial currents of the soul, and gains immediate momentum from them, even though philosophy may have given its conclusions no sufficient basis. Religion, on the other hand, deals with invisible things, with God, the soul and immortality. These suffer in vividness of impression by contrast with sensations. Their primary hold is more weak and variable ; and for their secondary hold they must rest on the mind and heart, on the clearness with which we have analyzed our intuitive, reflective powers, and the confidence we have been wont to repose in them.

Nor is religion, pure religion, any more immediately powerful in its relation to pleasure, than in its relation to sensation. It is indeed an independent and prolific source of enjoyment, but enjoyment of so lofty and derived a character, that it establishes no controlling current in the inexperienced mind. Its first action is likely to be one of restraint and censure, and thus the soul, in its early impulses, brute liberties, and passionate waywardness, is only too much inclined either to be emancipated from it, or to subvert it. Religion, therefore, other than blind superstition appealing to interests, or playing upon fears, stands in urgent need of the aid of philosophy, in securing for the facts which sustain it their due weight upon the mind.

Again, the powers which religion demands in the soul, by whose possession the data of religion are made possible and fit, rest for confirmation on mental science exclusively. Men do, it is true, in the outset easily believe in liberty, but later the notion becomes vague and uncertain. It is found to be in direct contradiction to all that transpires in the physical world, and to meet with no confirmation outside the mind, outside the circle of spiritual data of which it is the postulate. Hence the thoughts, under the influence of the senses, under the instruction of science, slip the notion of liberty, or so modify it as greatly to weaken the sense of obligation, of power to meet, and responsibility in meeting, the liabilities of life. The spiritual strength is relaxed, and the mind more or less completely succumbs to the prevalent forces that float it onward. It speculates more than it acts, and theorizes when it should be wakeful to the simple duties before it.

The very law also, the hidden seat of ethical authority in the soul, the voice of God within us, to which he takes appeal in every precept, rests for the proof of its existence,

the nature and authority of its declarations, on philosophy. If this is, after all, as many would have us believe, only the echo of our own interests, and the general interests, the whispered words of self-interest that have run up and down society, till they have at length become more or less audible in every soul, gathering and reverberating them, as the chambers of a sea-shell the motions of air and water ; or if some obscure experience has by transmission and growth ripened into an instinctive feeling we call conscience, then alas for religion. What we had taken as a means of understanding and obeying God, is after all only an acquired notion, gradually working its way into a conventional rule, by which we herd pleasantly and profitably with each other. If there be any law of God other than a physical law, that law must find its final enforcement in the rational response of each soul itself to it. The word of authority from without is nothing, unless there is an answering word from within ; and the adoption and affirmation by the soul itself of God's law, turn on the establishment of the moral nature in its primitive, independent strength. Any other government is either whip and goad, or allurement.

Such, then, is the close dependence of religion on philosophy. The seat of religion is in the soul itself, not in the senses, nor in the physical world ; and there must its sure foundations be explored. As we love God, as we value immortality, as we delight in the life which these conditions of our being spread before us, are we impelled again and again to renew the efforts by which the highway of faith and belief is thrown up, by which we escape from the visible into the invisible, and lay hold of the power to become the sons of God.

Another effort in this direction is to engage us. We shall strive to see what spiritual powers the leading doc-

trines of religion imply in us, what support these doctrines derive from those powers, and what in turn they lend to them. Though the inquiries of science have very little direct bearing on the foundation facts of faith, they are often pushed forward under a philosophy which makes little or no room for these facts. Hence the more earnest reason for our present inquiry. We wish to see exactly what that philosophy is which underlies religion,—for assuredly religion presupposes in every one of its doctrines a philosophy, as these doctrines bear immediately on the nature of man, and derive their fitness from it—and to place the two in their interdependence on their common, most rational and defensible ground. To do this is to construct a philosophy of religion ; is to disclose its roots in our spiritual constitution, and to uncover the intellectual grounds of the facts which support it.

This work falls to mental not to physical science. We are greatly indebted to scientists when they tacitly assume a sound philosophy, work as if matter and mind were both real, and busy themselves in a correct rendering of their phenomena, and a study of the laws of order found in them ; we only fall into confusion when we listen to the ultimate theories of knowledge which they propound. A philosophy which occupies itself only with impressions, which is avowedly a philosophy of impressions, may be serviceable in a superficial rendering of these, but ought, in all consistency, to be silent on questions which pertain to the secret nature, the origin and issue of things, the forecasting plans and underlying forces which sustain them. We render to science what belongs to science, to Cæsar what is Cæsar's, but we reserve to the human spirit and to God what is their own. We listen respectfully to the positive testimony of any man, but are more impatient of his negations.

CHAPTER I.

A Statement of Mental Powers.

AS we are to discuss the relations of religious truth to the mind itself, the support which it finds in our faculties, we need to have clearly before us the system of psychology from which we take our departure. We shall, in the present chapter, concisely give the leading conclusions of a philosophy which we have elsewhere stated and defended at length.

The fundamental condition of all knowledge is consciousness. By consciousness we mean the knowledge incident to the mind of its own states, its own phenomena. These phenomena fall into three divisions; intellections, emotions, volitions. Consciousness is not itself a power of mind, active or passive; intellectual, emotional or volitional; but is involved in the powers of mind, one and all. No mental power can be exercised, save under this condition, that its putting forth is known to the mind. Consciousness is, therefore, the postulate of all knowledge, since it is conditional to a knowing power, to the mind's activity. The knowledge, however, that can be referred to mere consciousness is that of mental acts and states; the farther knowledge which these acts and states may themselves furnish is to be referred to the mind as a knowing agent. Consciousness is the condition of all knowledge, as the knowing act, of whatever nature, can not remain a knowing act, save on the terms of being a conscious act.

Yet consciousness is the exclusive authority only for mental phenomena, as mere phenomena. These phenomena, as themselves acts of perception, intuition, reflection, are the grounds of the entire circle of secondary knowledge which they disclose to the mind.

As consciousness is thus primary in knowing, entering in as an essential condition of every intellectual state, we naturally enough refer in language our knowledge of these states to it, as if it were itself a second, central power of knowing. Not thus is it to be conceived ; such a conception is an illusion of speech. None of the powers thus put in the outer circle of knowing could have any efficiency, any meaning as faculties of knowledge, without it, their common characteristic. Nor could it, as an inner and separate act, yield its facts of knowledge, unless it itself were permeated by a farther consciousness, disclosing its own activity. Every mental act, as itself single and final, is penetrated by consciousness, receives its character as a mental act from consciousness, and goes forth to its complete and sufficient work, because it is in itself light. If we miss this power in a first act of mind, we should for a like reason miss it in a second act ; if we find it in a second act, we could equally well have found it in a first act.

When we say, therefore, that consciousness discloses all mental acts, and is the starting point of knowledge, we avail ourselves of familiar language to express a fact in itself more simple than our statement, to wit, the fact, that the mind can not know without knowing, feel without feeling ; that its acts must, from its very nature, transpire in its own light. Ceasing to be known, they cease to be. Consciousness, then, speaking exactly, is the antecedent condition of knowledge, its essential characteristic ; its regulative idea ; as is space the controlling condition of

physical facts. It is not itself an activity, but the form or method of a class of activities, to wit, thoughts, feelings, volitions. It is to be set down as the original category of a kind of being, to wit, intelligent being. It is thus to the mind an intuition, a direct, primitive apprehension of the antecedent ground of its own activity. When we say that consciousness discloses states of mind, we use a curt, familiar expression for the more exact one, the states of mind are, as activities or receptivities of mind, necessarily known to it. In no other way can they be states of mind. A regulative idea, like time or consciousness, has a double bearing. In reference to the facts it orders, it is a formal entity. Events are substantial entities; the space and time in which they occur are formal entities. Thoughts, emotions are again substantial entities, of which consciousness is the formal entity. All the real, distinct, qualitative being involved in the case belongs to the thought, the emotion, though the formal element of this being is expressed in the word consciousness. The formal element or entity, when perceived by the mind as the condition of the substantial or contained entity, is termed an intuition. Looked at in themselves, time, space, consciousness, are formal entities; looked at in reference to the mind's perception of them, they are intuitions.

Intellections, or products of the intellect, include, in the above division, perceptions and sensations, judgments, intuitions; or products of the senses, of the judgment and the reason; and these as restored or modified by memory and imagination. Mental states are often exceedingly complex, involving various kinds of more manifest and more obscure activity. Feeling promotes thought, but volition as an under-current sustains both, while perception, judgment, intuition are mingled in an obscure, intricate and perplexed way. The existence of a primary mental

power, that is of the ability of the mind to act in a given way, is to be established by our analysis of mental states, by reaching the simplest constituents found in them, and by referring those like in kind to a single activity of mind as their source. This method assumes that nothing is present to the mind save by virtue of its capacities or powers ; and that products, distinct in kind and ultimate, that is simple and undervived, imply corresponding faculties by which they are reached. Precisely this is what is meant by a power, the activity of the mind in furnishing itself with such and such elements of knowledge. This analysis of mental states affords evidence of the original, perceptive, intuitive powers of mind. A farther inquiry into the manner in which they are retained and combined brings to notice the secondary or reflective faculties. Conclusions so reached may be confirmed by language, by history, by anatomy, by comparative psychology.

We accept under this method the following as the intellectual powers ; as primary faculties, those of perception or the senses, those of intuition or the reason ; as secondary faculties, those of reflection or the understanding. Among the last are to be included memory, imagination, judgment. Perception, though it always contain as a nucleus a sense impression, is often most complex. It inwraps, in what seems a single and direct impression, the fruits of long experience, and the insight of reason, always present to furnish the comprehensive idea appropriate to each act. The difference between acquired and primitive perception, educated and uneducated sensations in man, is strikingly seen in contrasting the action of one blindfolded with that of one to whom blindness has become familiar, and by whom its difficulties have been in a measure mastered. The first is almost helpless, the second has gained much of the knowledge and freedom

incident to vision. Experience, combined with the lower senses only, rapidly expands suggestions so slight as to pass unregarded by one who sees, converts them into interpretation, constructive judgments, and by them so unfolds the conditions of ordinary action as to make it easy and direct. A blind boy may walk freely, even drive freely. I once asked such an one how he was able to determine the nearness of an obstacle, a tree or a fence ; or to tell when he reached the open road into which he turned. He replied that he thought he did it by the character of the sounds in their immediate neighborhood. He had formerly been in the habit of uttering a low whistling noise, to aid by its reverberations the ear in these decisions ; but now he no longer found this necessary. When questioned as to his present method of decision, when the air was still, he responded, the air is rarely or never still, rarely or never silent. Nature was thus to him full of gentle whispers, sounds unheard by us, by which she unceasingly, almost unconsciously imparted to him that most immediate and necessary knowledge, which gives to life, under her sheltering hand, activity, safety and pleasure. Educated perception is at the farthest possible remove from mere sensation ; the whole acquired power of the man is condensed in it.

Sensations alone furnish the crudest material to the mind, a material altogether formless. The forms, that is the rational comprehensive ideas, such as space and time, under which the mind learns slowly with increasing exactness to work up and present this raw material, we believe to be brought forward by the mind itself in virtue of its own insight into each kind of being. We believe this because no analysis of the sensation as mere sensation can furnish these ideas, nor indeed can any mind precede to combine and relate sensations without presup-

posing and involving the presence of one or more of these ideas. There may indeed be instinctive action, the product of organic stimulus and muscular mechanism, which may involve the practical observance of the conditions implied in regulative ideas, such as cause and effect, space, time ; but so does the flight of a cannon-ball. The tacit inherence in action of its appropriate conditions, and their distinct use in an intellectual apprehension of that action, are very different things. No stages of imperceptible growth can bear conscious life from one to the other. The instinctive experience may be repeated, no matter how many times, it approaches no nearer by repetition an intelligent recognition of its own essential relations. To such a recognition, in all its degrees, the appropriate ideas must be antecedent, and as these ideas are not a portion of experiences themselves, but their interpreting light, they must be given otherwise than by the experience they are to expound ; to this they are transcendental. It can provoke them but never yield them. Sensations may be similar, and result day by day in similar effects. Resemblance may thus, as a regulative form, be present in the life of the brute. So is it also in the inorganic world. The rock is affected in like fashion by the sunshine, showers and frosts of successive seasons. But in neither case is there an apprehension of the agreement as an agreement. A prior condition to this is not simply consciousness, but the notion of resemblance ; and there is no tendency in a mere reiteration of impressions to induce this. A considerable period may elapse before the rational mind shall analyze out this from its other ideas, but standing first in logical order, in the act of comprehension, such an act can find no initiation without it. The conscious presence of these regulative ideas, in a concrete form, marks an epoch, constitutes a node in the development of intelligence. Pro-

cesses are by it lifted into the light, which before proceeded automatically in the darkness.

The first of these ideas is existence. The simplest idea under which we contemplate everything, is that of being. In thinking anything, a sensation for instance, to be, the mind lifts itself above it as a mere experience, and takes one step in its investigation. The mind thus ceases simply to feel, and brings forward one idea for the elucidation of feeling, the notion of real being; an object about which it is ready to inquire. Of course this movement is initiated in an obscure, semi-conscious, concrete form; and only slowly assumes a clear, sufficient, abstract statement. The second idea is number, though the third, resemblance, is closely united with it in application. Scarcely anything can be said to be single to the senses, and those things, as dots or grains of sand, which approach nearest unity have no more power to represent a unit, than objects complicated in their parts. The grain of sand is one, but so is the earth on which it rests; the dot is one, but equally so is the longest line we can draw through it. The mind settles for itself its units; nor is its unit in one direction at all its unit in another. The unit of color does not explain the unit of heat, nor the unit of sound. The sensations of each are quite distinct. In fact the one as one is in no case given by the senses merely. The one is not a sensation, but a varying, flexible form of thought, which the mind brings to sensations for their convenient handling. Thus the line may be one line, or three feet, or thirty-six inches; and these are all equally distinctions which the mind has set up for its own purposes. The marble which lies in the child's hand is necessarily seen and felt, but is not necessarily thought of as one; nor as one only, till the mind has settled the method of contemplation. When the mind shall

consider it under this category, it may do so under its cohesion as one, or under its colors as three, or under its zones as five, or under its meridians as many, or under its particles as involving a number indefinitely great. Moreover, the numerical relations which the mind furnishes to the material of the senses, as a form or an explanatory method of handling, rest on an absolute identity or equivalence of units, of which the senses know nothing, and of which it is the perpetual labor of science to teach them sufficient to make its results practically reliable. The two and two which are equal to four, are, at some point of comparison which the mind has instituted, exact equivalents, equivalents in weight or capacity or length. The mind can, indeed, hold its units in air by its own speculative thought, aloof from everything, multiply and divide them, and institute between them changeable equations of value. This it does by keeping the senses at bay, or if it employs them, as in counting on one's fingers-ends, by assigning to their objects a purely typical or representative value. The moment, however, mathematics descends from the air, and begins to deal with realities, it assumes among them an equality never actually reached. We talk of inches and pounds and degrees, but we never reach their equivalents, or if we do, we do not know it. It is the perpetual and perplexing problem of science to lay down approximately exact and stable units.

Abstraction finds instant play in connection with number. One color, one flavor, one quality, or one relation is singled out from others, and disjoined to the mind from that complex product in which the senses find it, but from which they may be wholly unable to separate it. One and many play up and down through all the united and divided things of nature, putting them, to the intellect, in new numerical relations of its own construction.

Resemblance, a third comprehensive category, is applied conjointly with number. This idea is, in its recognition as due to the reason, as old at least as the time of Plato. Likeness and unlikeness give constant occasion for numerical distinctions. We reach the number of species in a genus by directing attention to differences ; the number of individuals in a species, by an observation of agreements. The units in our aggregates include every degree of likeness, from the most complete correspondence to the mere fact of some form or other of distinct being, by which the idea of one is attached to each thing in the enumeration.

Conceptions are the products of the mind under this idea of resemblance. However loosely the qualities are defined by which a general term, as animal or horse or man, finds application, the agreeing qualities, which in popular speech or in scientific terminology carry over the common noun from one object to another in its own class, are grouped under this notion of resemblance. As the initiative step in conceptions, classifications, generalizations, is a fundamental fact in thought and language, this notion of resemblance is seen at once to be a most comprehensive category. It covers much the larger share of judgments, as the subject and predicate are almost always united on the ground of a direct or implied agreement. In the proposition, John is a man, a direct resemblance, as in all classifications, is the basis of the assertion. The proposition, John strikes, proceeds on the implied agreement between John's action and a general form of action termed striking. The same is true of all propositions that attribute states, acts, qualities. In so far, however, as any judgment involves another regulative idea, there is in it an element not to be referred to mere resemblance. John struck James, is a proposition which does more than define the kind of John's action. It gives

the time of its putting forth, and this is a condition to be understood by itself, and not an agreement or a disagreement with something else. The same is true of all assertions which involve a distinct, intuitive idea, as, The action is right, The apple is, There are two apples.

The mathematical and the logical mechanism of thought are given in these two notions of number and resemblance. Starting thus early in primary and universally applicable categories, mathematics and logic bear sway everywhere, in every process by which the mind works up its material. Mathematics, resting primarily on number, renders the larger aid to the physical world; and logic, resting on identity, gives its chief assistance to the development of mental facts.

Passing these three comprehensive ideas, the remaining categories lose something of their general character, and stand to each other in definite relations, sometimes of mutual exclusion. Space and consciousness define opposed phenomena, and shut them out from each other. Those facts which call for space, locality, in which to be realized, are physical; those which are determined in intrinsic character by consciousness are mental. These phenomena are at times most closely related, but never interpenetrate each other.

A physical fact is always known in one way, by sensation; under one condition, that of location: a mental fact is known in another way, to wit, by virtue of its being a mental fact, to the mind whose it is; and under another condition or form, that of consciousness. No matter how closely these two kinds of facts may skirt each other, there is no running of lines across, no triangulation from one to the other. There is still a misty demarcation which sunders all connections. Passing from one to the other, the mind is for an instant as it were, in syncope, and takes

up the threads of knowledge again without being able to unite them to those just left. Sensation and consciousness report facts from opposite sides of the sphere of knowledge. Like eyes whose circles of vision never intersect each other, each has its own constructions. Nay, like eyes that see totally different things, each renders phenomena comparable and apprehensible only among themselves. No two realms can be more diverse than these two, since we drop down upon them by totally distinct avenues of approach, totally distinct conditions.

In accordance with this diversity of character is the difference of law, of connection, prevalent in each class of phenomena. Cause and effect is the controlling, uniting idea of physical facts, spontaneity of mental facts. A phenomenon that does not transcend in its line of connections our physical organism is one of necessary, causative dependencies ; one that does strike upward into the activities of mind before it returns to the physical world is so far forth one of spontaneous force. The mind does not think by compulsion, feel, aside from sensation, by compulsion, nor resolve by compulsion. Mathematical power is spontaneous, original power ; a power evoked, not one coerced, by the presence of Euclid and a black-board. There are no realized, stored up, forces that must issue in such and so much thinking ; in feeling, fixed in kind and quantity. The physical changes that accompany thinking and feeling, the transfer of molecular forces, are explained by sufficient, purely physical results ; but neither these nor their methods of production suffice to include and explain the states of mind incident to them. The spontaneity of mind is not lost because it gives rise to necessary sequences in the physical world. To talk of a thought-force as one in the circle of correlative forces is to forget that that circle is already complete. The chemi-

cal, thermal changes of brain-tissue are exhaustive within themselves; there is no chasm between them into which we can drop our thought-force, no known link among them which we can designate by this name. The highest form of this spontaneity is seen in choice, and hence this comprehensive idea, defining purely intellectual connections, is covered by the word liberty. There is no opportunity for liberty, freedom, unless there is intellectual spontaneity on which it can be grafted: as liberty is nothing but spontaneity put forth between alternative lines of action, unless there is true origination, there can be no liberty.

But freedom, spontaneity, as it finds no necessary law within itself as a governing impulse, can companion only with intelligence, and thus find a law to yield to without itself in the conditions of its activity. Its causes must be final causes, that is motives in advance of it, not forces behind it. Accordingly we have the true, the good and the beautiful as objects of intellectual activity, giving rational purposes and a law of freedom to its life. A truth is the agreement between our conceptions, our judgments, and that to which they pertain. It is a modified form of the notion of resemblance, one by which we link together the intellectual and actual, as valid counterparts of each other. The right and the beautiful we accept as primitive guiding conceptions—the right before the beautiful, as the highest beauty embodies the right in its most perfect form.

Time is the comprehensive idea by which the two series of events, physical and mental, are interwoven. They touch and condition each other constantly with no transfer of force that we can trace from either side. Indeed the word, force, though applied alike to the agencies which work physical and mental changes, seems to

express something quite diverse in the two cases. The force of a spring and the force of a thought are as distinct as two things well can be. These diverse lines of activity are merely netted together at identical points in time, at which they meet, but from which they ever depart into diverse realms above and below.

A last regulative idea is that of the infinite, applicable to space and time, to potential being or power. The mind finds an occasion for this idea in the contemplation either of physical or spiritual facts. The infinite is to be carefully distinguished from the indefinite, the undefinably great. An infinite series in mathematics is one capable of indefinite expansion, but how far soever extended it remains finite in value. The physical creation is indefinitely large in reference to our apprehension of it, but is none the less finite and definite in itself. The power actually put forth by a being of infinite power is finite, since in the very exercise it receives realization, form, limitation. God is not exhausted by his works.

We are now prepared to define what we understand by thought. This definition will make the sketch of the philosophy on which we are to proceed sufficiently extended for our present purposes. We can not defend its positions, having already done this, nor will the value of our later conclusions altogether depend on the exact acceptance of their philosophical premises. Thought is the office of the understanding. It works up the material offered by the senses under the comprehending ideas furnished by the reason so as to cause it to subserve the purposes of intelligence. The fact of being and the kind of being are recognized under the first three of the ideas now given. The inquiry how or where that being is to be found proceeds under the notions of consciousness and space ; its date under that of time, its law under

causation or under spontaneity and right. The limits of the being are defined by the idea of the infinite with its correlative the finite.

These notions are, or should be, the exhaustive categories of thought, and hence there is no judgment, no abstract or general term, that does not imply one or more of them. All the processes of thought necessarily proceed under them. The material afforded by sensation can be in no way considered by the mind save as it brings a query, a suggestion, to it from one or other of its own rational, regulative notions. If it inquires concerning a thing, Is it? What is it? Where is it? How came it to be? To what purpose can it be put? or of an event, When was it? What was its origin? What will be its issue? these and like questions spring up under suggestions of its own, prompting the mind to institute them. Without these comprehensive ideas under which it is ever laboring in some concrete form to comprehend objects, to set them in order before its rational, contemplative power, the mind would remain quiescent under sensations, finding nothing that it could do with them beyond experiencing them. These, it is true, might, by instinctive nervous connections and by memory, assume an orderly operation on the animal organism; but there would be involved in this no intellectual apprehension or handling of them. Thought, then, is the mind's comprehension of the phenomena given it in sensation and consciousness under its own regulative notions.

The distinction between brute intelligence and human intelligence seems to us to lie just here. The brute is endowed with sensation, imagination, memory. Memory, impressed by the salient features of past experiences, combines variously and serviceably the material of sensation; till the events of life, within the narrow range that fall to a

brute, come to be spontaneously ordered with more or less adroitness. This work proceeds not thoughtfully, as in man, not by ideas and abstract conceptions, but by concrete experiences impressed upon the memory by pain and pleasure, and so thrown into permanent association. The dog, baffled and punished in one effort, and successful in another, has in each an item of indissoluble affinities, a concrete truth that acts with the quickness and certainty of a sensation, an automatic, organic connection, on each suitable occasion. These terms of intelligence in the mere brute are complemented by large instinctive endowments, among which we should put the instant, uneducated mastery of space relations, shown by the young of all animals.

The intelligence, then, of animals is of this nature. Their sensations, their mental states, and their muscular efforts are united by appetites, by instinctive impulses, and by *memoriter* connections shaped by experience, and, within relatively narrow limits, act with great certainty and invariableness. The intelligence of man, while disclosing an under-current of action like that now attributed to the brute, is characterized by taking up its sensations, its experience, into the clear consciousness afforded it by the recognized presence of rational ideas, and there constructing them into well-defined judgments. The strictly rational element in the action of the brute seems to us to be involved not evolved; with man it is evolved, and may be analytically discerned and expressed. Hence, in the one case, all education consists in the careful formation of fixed associations; in the other, in assiduously breaking up these, and leading the mind to independent, constructive thought.

CHAPTER II.

The Being of Matter and of Mind.

WE need to perform a little more preliminary work in indicating the grounds of belief in the real existence of matter and of mind. Neither matter nor mind is directly known ; certainly not if by direct knowledge is meant that given in consciousness, that which the mind has of its own states. Among these states are neither their external nor internal sources. We must be allowed, as a convenience of language, to use the word consciousness as designating the mind's knowledge of its own phenomena, though we deny the inference therefrom, that the mind, by an additional act, searches itself, and are aware that we thereby turn attention from the true relation of facts, much as we do in the current phrase, The sun moves. Direct knowledge is that which the mind has of its own states. But it will be said, that this definition begs the question, and that we assume to ourselves the entire ground when we say, that the mind has a necessary, immediate apprehension of its own phenomena, and only a mediate knowledge of anything beyond them. Whatever may be the extension we shall give to the terms, direct knowledge, it is plain that the consciousness which belongs to the mind of its own states must remain its most immediate knowledge ; for there is here the intervention of no single power, but that inevitable cognition of mental facts by which alone they become facts. We shall first show, then, that the existence neither of mind nor of matter is a term or factor in consciousness.

We arrive at matter and at mind as the permanent substrata of their respective phenomena in the same way.

The notion of causation impels the mind instantly to supply a substratum as the ground or source of mental activities. The idea of causation does not allow the mind to accept as ultimate and self-sufficient the film of phenomena, but compels it to put beneath this surface flow of perceptions and feelings permanent streams of forces, of which these are the momentary expression. If the mind should, for an instant, omit this reference, all events would at once lose for it cohesion, and every thread of causal inquiry disappear. Causation includes the hidden force in and under each effect, making cause and effect the invisible and visible, the intangible and tangible, sides of the same thing. It thus involves the fixed succession both of superficial facts and underlying forces. The one notion covers both these points. The intuition that forbids my acceptance of phenomena without forces present to occasion them, also forbids the acceptance of either phenomena or forces in the present moment without corresponding facts in the previous moment to which they can be referred. In other words, the mind is held firm to the postulate of all scientific thought; nothing stands alone, but is linked backward and forward in necessary dependencies. Each event is caused, and is, in turn, causal through an underlying *nexus* of force. Thus when a fact of any sort is present, the mind demands with the vigor of its rational constitution, a vigor which supplies the activities of every hour and the inexhaustible energies of science, that that fact shall find explanation and rest in other facts.

Thus with a movement, than which no mental action is more inevitable and certain, more immediate, automatic and positive, the mind puts beneath all phenomena an appropriate force as their permanent seat or source. This action is so spontaneous and instantaneous, that when it stands connected with sensation, we do not readily dis-

tinguish it as a separate constituent. A well-known voice strikes the ear ; we immediately infer the approach of our friend, yet speak of his presence as a sensation, we heard him. This primary and omnipresent judgment of causation is more closely interlocked with all the states and activities of the mind than any other. Force, variable, invisible and undefinable as it is, is the pregnant, hourly conception of daily life and of exact science. If the size and distance of visible objects are settled by judgments, which an inexact and variable experience has formed, yet so settled, that, in the case of our habitual estimates, we seem to have taken them in as parts of vision, it ought not to surprise us, that one uniform judgment, never departed from, that of real force underlying all phenomena, should be so inclosed in the sensation as not to be practically distinguished from it.

Only careful analysis, or appearances of a doubtful character, ever separate in the mind's action sensations from the real being they habitually indicate. The thing and its manifestations cover and contain each other. Hence the notion of substantial being is primary, fundamental to the mind, and rests for its validity on two activities, the activity of the mind in sensation or in thought, and its activity in referring the state or thought under its category of causation.

There are two classes of facts, in a most general division, with which the mind has to deal, sensations and impressions. In sensations the mind perceives qualities only very partially subject to itself, qualities which have a peculiar definiteness, which persist with a power and, occasion being given, return with a precision, that completely distinguish them from its other experiences, which we have termed impressions. Moreover, these sensations, or more properly the objects of them, admit of approach

and confirmation in a variety of ways through different senses. Cross-lines are thus run whose intersections establish points. The mind's experience in these various senses, furnished as it is with the ideas of space and causation to be called out on occasion, leads it to ascribe external existence to these fixed, defined sources of stable phenomena, phenomena determined for the senses in a character and order to which they can return at pleasure, but cannot alter. This external reference, spontaneously made, becomes constant, unwavering; and is confirmed by every moment's experience. The mind does not in the outset ponder the reference, but with the certainty of sufficient powers *makes* it, and ever after confirms it.

On the other hand, the mind's impressions, its experiences, other than those of sensation, assume so variable and relatively indistinct a form, so fluctuate with its own activity, so come and go at its own bid, so flicker about the firmer sensations that give rise to them, that the mind unhesitatingly refers them, with more or less play of freedom, to itself. Thus the great division into mental and physical phenomena is made by the early, inevitable action of the intuitive and reflective faculties; first made as a practical discrimination, and more and more made as a division clearly realized to the mind itself. With every event and every year it is impressed upon our experience, till it seems a part of our original, sensational being. It is a portion of our spontaneous being in the sense that rational powers must, in their unfolding, make it, and that with increasing distinctness and certainty. It is not true that there is at no time confusion in the adult mind at this point. In dreams we are at a loss to know whether the objects present to the imagination are real or unreal, and the question may be distinctly raised by us. In waking moments we fail at times to distinguish an impression

which has floated into the mind from the recollections of facts with which it may be encompassed. Insanity is, in large part, the breaking down in some direction of this division, the subversion of the mind's action in separating sensations and impressions.

There is one important fact in this reference of diverse phenomena to matter and to mind respectively. Though it is made in each instance under the idea of causation, in the first case we reach a physical force, and in the second an intellectual power. The physical force is definitely expressed in the effect, and must itself be referred to antecedent causes exactly commensurate with it. The rigid form which our physical experience assumes, gives to the mind the occasion for applying the notion of causation as an exact correspondence or equivalence between causes and effects, the transmission of force without alteration or loss. Thoughts and feelings have no such invariability, they are rather in constant fluctuation. Hence, though impelled to refer them as results to an intellectual agent, we ascribe to that agent a spontaneous power, thus cutting the connection backward. We do not, as in physical events, trace thought as the expression of a transmitted force, through the mind, for a moment its medium, to something beyond it, but are satisfied to find a final reference for it in spontaneous intellectual activity. What we term causes in the mental world, are either these intellectual powers, sufficient in themselves to secure variable phenomena; or the occasions on which they are put forth. Thought as thought, is to be distinguished from its physical conditions, from the series of close-bound organic changes which underlie and accompany it. Cerebral activity is physical, and subject to physical law. The mental state of which it is a condition, stands in quite another relation to the intellectual powers whose product it is.

The recognition of the continuity of causation in one class of facts, and of spontaneity in another closely affiliated class, we believe to arise from a mind so endowed with appropriate comprehensive ideas as to be able ultimately, first with spontaneous, and then more carefully with reflective, insight, to analyze, classify and correctly construe all its experiences. It is not necessary to suppose that in the application of its intuitions, any more than in the use of its senses, the mind is absolutely, universally right. That it steadily approximates such correctness, and is aided in its approach by experience and reflection, are facts sufficient to prompt effort, and give a guarantee to its conclusions. If man must learn to see, to hear, to master his senses, why may he not learn the limits of his intuitions, and the grounds of their application? As a fact we know that spontaneity has, in the past, constantly trespassed on the field of causation; that it has been inquiry that has served to determine the perpetuity and fixed equivalence of physical forces; and that, on the other hand, under this momentum of investigation, causation is, in turn, displacing spontaneity and usurping the realm of mind.

The universality and necessity which characterize correct mental action, and which are said to belong to our intuitions, are proximate and slowly approached, not absolute and immediate. Some will refer a physical fact to a variable, spontaneous cause, and others will ascribe variable mental acts to absolute, realized forces, and some will accept in either region, chance events. The idea of number, even, is not, in its application, immediate and exact beyond those narrow limits in which the mind can hold the constituent units of a sum or a product distinctly before it, and these limits are settled by cultivation. Three or five may, for a long period, be the numerical range of a tribe. The axioms of Geometry are the brief steps which

the ordinary mind is, at the outset, able to take. Its longest propositions are axioms to one able to grasp them in an instantaneous, comprehensive act, to stride over them in one undivided step. Certainty and correctness of use are the product of experience, even in our intuitions. They come to experience, arise under it, and submit themselves to its instruction, though originally beyond it. Skill in the handling of the mind waits on use, as truly as in the government of the body.

The belief in matter and mind, each under its own characteristics, is one of the earliest which the intellect reaches by the interpretation of its sensations and impressions under its intuitions. Experience constantly deepens and more clearly defines this distinction, till, finally, it seems to us a piece of primitive, direct knowledge. Native powers and life-long drift stratify and bury these truths in the mental soil.

We will now give the reasons why these facts of physical and mental existence cannot be set down as direct knowledge, the products of consciousness; or, if we extend the terms, direct knowledge, to sensation, of sensation. The "ego and the non-ego" are both inferentially, under the force of intuitions, involved in the states of consciousness; neither of them are directly found there. To hold to a direct knowledge of matter, as a constituent of any act or state appearing in consciousness, is to break down the distinction between substance and phenomena. Physical phenomena are the effects which arise in the interaction of substances or forces. Substance, force, is to the senses the unknown, the unknowable source of these effects. That anything is known to the senses, finds its entrance by them to consciousness, is proof of its phenomenal being, that it has arisen from the action of forces, and does not express their intrinsic nature. It is because of this distinction that

we are ever referring appearances to the forms of being they indicate. Now if the mind can know matter as matter in consciousness, it must know it aside from any phenomenal manifestation, since phenomena, from the very conception of their nature, do not put us in direct possession, but only in inferential possession, of their sources. They would cease to be phenomena, if they became noumena. The distinction of substance and appearance would be lost, since the substance would be known as the appearance, and under the same conditions with it. The substance is thus no longer the hidden source of effects, but is found among them as one of them. This knowledge of matter as matter, aside from phenomena, must either be a knowledge of effects or of causes. It can not be a knowledge of effects, since effects are phenomenal. It is, then, a presence in our sensations of causes as causes. But if our sensations include causes, we have no farther occasion for a reference of these to unknown, material causes, and the state of mind called a sensation becomes complete, self-explanatory and final. The division into substance and phenomena, cause and effect, is lost, and both lapse into continuous, homogeneous, fluctuating states of mind, the data of consciousness. The sensation itself wraps up in its inner being both the cause and the effect, and, as a single, simple state, gives no opportunity for maintaining the distinction between them. To know matter as a conscious ingredient in sensation, is to know causes ; to know phenomenally causes is to break down the division between them and effects, since all that we can regard as effects, are these same sensations now known in whole or in part as causes. If this division is on these conditions to be restored, it must be by an effort to divide the sensation itself ; and this, if it issued in any fruitful result, would be to restore again the sunken intuition and the unknown cause, as given above.

Either the complexity of the sensation is involved in its containing at once the cause and the effect, the substance and the phenomena, or the identity of these two constituents. If we accept these as identical, we lose the very framework of science and philosophy ; if we regard the sensation as complex, we go back to the secret intuitions which impart the complexity.

A second kindred objection to an assertion of a direct knowledge in consciousness of the "ego and non-ego" is, that it confuses the office of consciousness by obliterating the difference between the mind and the mind's acts. Consciousness belongs to every mental act and state as its essential characteristic, that which lifts it into the intellectual world. It is the condition of light which pertains to it. Consciousness can not be made to disclose the very mind, unless the mind is a mental act or state. Consciousness can reveal the mind, only on condition that the mind equals its own activities and nothing more. If we strive to hold fast to a distinction between the mind and its transient states, and yet insist that the mind directly knows itself, we shall be unable to refer that knowledge to consciousness alone. We must assert some sort of an inner eye with which it looks at itself, as valid being, and so gets an interior state to which, as a condition, consciousness can attach itself. There must be a central vision, a masterly oversight, by the mind of the parts of its own being ; for consciousness is not a power, but the disclosing light of a power. In order of thought, the mental activity goes before consciousness.

But this comprehensive, supervisory, perceptive power is thus reduced to a simple activity of mind, and its results presented as only one of the states of mind. Consciousness, therefore, in disclosing it, can not disclose the mind itself, but only one of its phenomena. A direct knowl-

edge of the mind by itself can not then be referred to consciousness, for this yields activities, states; but if insisted on must be referred to some peculiar perceptive act whose object and subject are both the mind. The mind would thus be made to reflect itself, the eye to see itself. The knowing power would be hopelessly confounded by being compelled to stand at both ends of the knowing process, by being compounded of all its ingredients. To make, therefore, a direct appeal to consciousness for a knowledge by the mind of its own unphenomenal being, is to quite mistake the data yielded by consciousness, to wit, states of mind. Foundation work in philosophy is thereby confused and lost.

A third objection to a direct knowledge of matter is, that it finds no support in ordinary language and experience. This statement is quite the reverse of that made by Hamilton, but it seems to us clearly correct. Men doubtless do believe that they have a knowledge of the material world in perception, but they make no such distinction between a direct and an inferential knowledge as that on which this discussion turns. All that is meant by the language of common life, I see the tree, I hear the bird, I smell the rose, is, that a knowledge of these external objects is immediately incident to perception, without the obvious intervention of reasoning. This we admit. The latent judgments involved in a perception, are rightfully wrapped up in it, and, as essential constituents, bear in language the same label. Men do not distinguish in speech between the direct and indirect elements of perception, its germ and its completed form, when experience has crowded it full of every variety of inference. Familiar speech makes no analysis of the process, but refers a knowledge of external objects to it as one composite act. Every mind, however, easily discerns the enlarging element

of experience enclosed in sensation, when not able perfectly to separate the two.

This objection can fairly be pushed farther ; direct perception of material objects contradicts experience. So obvious is it that in vision we do not directly perceive remote objects, that Hamilton is compelled to admit it. He says, " It has been curiously held, that in looking at the sun, moon, or any other object of sight, we are actually conscious of those distant objects. . . . Nothing can be more absurd ; we perceive through no sense aught external, but what is in immediate relation and in immediate contact with the organ."* The implication of this passage is flatly against experience and the language in which it is ordinarily expressed. We are said to see the sun and the moon, the land and the rocks. It is of these that we are thought to gain a knowledge in perception, and of nothing else. Men do not suppose that they recognize directly the retina and the image on it, or any portion of the nervous mechanism that mediates between mind and matter. They would be surprised to be told that they did. These facts, this method of vision, remain unknown to the most of men, and when learned have the fascination of novelty. The light in its nature and action, the eye in its functions, or in its simple, physical structure, are not known directly or indirectly in vision ; they remain secrets to be unlocked by science. What is known are the lakes, the islands and the trees. To ascribe the one knowledge to perception is as much a surprise as to deny to it the other.

Nor are we any nearer this doctrine of direct perception, if we turn to the sense of touch. If the appropriate irritation is secured anywhere along the line of nervous connection, it is instantly referred to the superficial extremity of the nerve, and the ordinary inference made as to its

* Lectures, p. 357.

origin. The sources of sensations of touch are not, aside from experience, accurately discriminated. Thus one can not at once cease to feel through an amputated limb, to such a degree does acquired knowledge overrule the existing fact. It seems a preposterous belief to be supported by an appeal to consciousness, "that we perceive the rays of light in relation to, and in contact with the retina;" we do not necessarily so much as know whether there be any retina. It may well be doubted whether, aside from an experience in which light is constantly varying in intensity, we should even know of the existence of light, and of its connection with vision. Experience teaches us the dependence of air and sound; and earlier, in a more direct way, that of light and vision. Do we also know directly the waves of motion which, in the ear, give rise to sound, propagating the impression through the auditory nerve?

To hold to a direct knowledge of the external object in vision, is more reasonable and more in accordance with ordinary experience than to claim a knowledge of "the bodily organism itself, or that part of the sensorium which is excited to action."* Of the first we have in perception an indirect cognition, of the second no cognition whatever.

If the sensational nucleus of perception is one of substance and not of form, as Morell, a disciple of Hamilton on this point, claims, then should we have an absolute knowledge, not a variable and relative knowledge, of an external fact. He says, "Every notion we have of an external object—as a house, a tree, or a flower—is compounded of two elements, a material and a formal. The matter is furnished by the direct sensational intuition of a concrete reality; and this is perception; the form is fur-

* Porter's Human Intellect, p. 132.

nished by the logical faculty." * If this were true, we ought to have an exact knowledge of the size and shape and position of the tree, since these are settled by the substance of the facts before us, and should be rendered by a knowledge of that substance. The substance appears and only appears under definite conditions of size and form, and how can we directly know this substance without involving in that knowledge a knowledge of its inseparable adjuncts? As a fact, however, we have a very wavering, uncertain apprehension of these primary qualities—so-called—of matter, which in each particular case condition it to its own form of being. Our vacillating recognition of the, for the time being, essential conditions of the fact, goes to show, that we do not directly know it in definite substance, but through symbols of a changeable rendering. The shifting judgments of perception, and all the deceptions which can be played upon it by size, position, motion, arise from its inferential character. Form is not logically deducible from substance, but is precise and actual with it; so would be its perception, if that perception started in substance. Impressions interpreted by experience give changeable form, and this Protean form inlocks the unknown substance.

It is to be observed, that under this fourth objection, we give all the range to the word, *direct*, which any can wish to assign it, and still find the doctrine of direct perception untenable. The question with us has been, not merely whether consciousness, but whether perception furnishes, as a sensational nucleus, a knowledge of substance. Yet the two queries are one; for consciousness alters no knowledge, but simply conditions it to be knowledge in its own order. The discussion thus becomes, Is there any power, any activity, that directly cognizes, takes to itself, matter as matter, so that in yielding its product

* Philosophy of Religion, p. 45.

in consciousness matter is there yielded? The perceptive power, if any, must be that power; and this only renders mental phenomena attributable to external causes. For it to do more than this would be for it to give unphenomenal results, unconstructed, chaotic substance; not the substance which underlies definite appearances, is believed in because of those appearances, and, as a force, is expressed and measured by them. Nor can we, failing in perception of a direct knowledge of real being, seek it in intuition. Intuitions yield ideas, not facts.

A fifth objection to direct perception is, that it legitimately involves either idealism or materialism, or an ambiguous attitude between the two. If the mind knows mind directly, matter directly, and its own phenomena directly, in precisely the same way, an easy inference is, that they are all of the same nature. If matter comes within consciousness, it loses its material characteristics, as much as would mind its distinctive qualities if it came within space. Hence idealism is a natural inference from the presence of matter as matter in consciousness side by side with its own states. But all the materialistic tendencies of modern philosophy are easily evolved from the same premises. The materialist may, like Spencer, decline to identify matter with mind, but, including all the facts of mind in sensations and their faintly echoed and necessarily concatenated impressions, make the laws of these the underlying principles of mental facts. When the division between substance and phenomena is lost, and all phenomena are found upon one plane, it is open to our philosophy to choose either idealism or materialism, or to hold itself in abeyance between the two. Practically it will reach the one or the other according as it searches for the laws of these homogeneous phenomena in sensations, or in logical inferences; in a certain stubborn ten-

dency of the phenomena themselves, or in a certain fixed construction of them by the mind.

Thus the identification of real and phenomenal being in perception, as both phenomenally present in it, plays into the very philosophies which, as a doctrine, it was brought forward to oppose. It turns attention from the true basis on which the dual existence of matter and mind can be made to rest, and furtively identifies in consciousness the two elements, substance and phenomena, cause and effect, which are to be kept most sedulously apart, if we are to retain the fundamental distinctions of realism. It is as real being under diverse categories, that mind and matter stand forever apart ; their known phenomena are equally present, and only present, in the mind.

The results of vivisection confirm the view we have urged. Those to which we refer are given by Taine in his work *On Intelligence*. It has been found that the nervous centres of even the higher senses are below the cerebrum ; that of hearing in the auricular protuberance and that of sight in the corpora quadrigemina. These portions of the encephalon remaining uninjured, though the cerebrum be entirely removed, reflex action can be secured through both the eye and the ear. Sight and sound still continue to affect the muscles. Yet the animal, so mutilated, has no knowledge of external objects, can not avoid obstacles in walking, and will not help itself to food. In these facts there is proof that a crude sensation gives no impression of the exterior world, till, the lower centre being put in connection with the cerebrum, it is wrought up by its action into a completed perception. The knowledge of facts as facts belongs to the secondary, the cerebral, and not to the primary, the sensational, elements involved.

We urge also as a reason which should lead us to

scrutinize cautiously this doctrine, that it was used by Hamilton, decidedly against the general drift of philosophy, as a make-shift against the scepticism of his time. It bore, in the circumstances of its introduction, the appearance of a refuge from an unacceptable conclusion. Moreover, it was made necessary, as a means of meeting unbelief, only because Hamilton did not, in his philosophy, attach to the notion of causation the authority that belongs to it. He regarded it not as a rational intuition, but as the result of the mind's weakness, its inability to conceive the commencement of any thing. This foible of the mind is always, according to Hamilton, leading it to put back of each event a previous event to sustain it.

The doctrine of direct perception, if it were correct, would give a basis, not by one tittle stronger than that found in perception, intuition and reflection conjointly, for the real being of the physical world. The powers of the mind stand or fall together, and no one of them can claim a constitutional superiority to another. Sensations easily usurp the field as against intuitions, but, in the court of reason, one faculty has no veracity beyond another as regards what each clearly affirms. A belief in the existence of matter and mind is grounded, deeply and safely grounded, in the primitive, normal, concurrent action of our intellectual powers, those of the sense, the understanding, and the reason. The second unites the other two in reaching this primitive truth. There is no loss in this at once simple and complex action. A belief in matter and mind may as well rest on this triple basis as on sensation alone.

If the claims of Hamilton are just, that men, in a direct, simple, perceptive act, take knowledge of matter and mind, it is strange that any doubt should have arisen on the subject. A fact of consciousness, so universal and

patent as this, should never have been lost sight of ; or if for a moment overlooked, should, on the redirection of the attention to it, have met with instant acceptance. The history of this discussion shows, that there is something more involved than a simple act of mind, a primitive fact of consciousness ; that there is a subtle problem of mental analysis, and hence that a result—the generally admitted result of a belief in real being—due to one power or combination of powers, may easily be ascribed to another. If the knowledge of matter were a purely perceptive fact, and not one of obscure inferences, it would be the unmistakable, granular centre of every sensation, as much as that of color, or odor, or flavor, and consciousness would not fail to report it at the slightest suggestion. Men do not doubt, it is a doubt impossible even to philosophy, that a thought, a feeling, a vision are present to consciousness. On this theory real being, matter as matter, mind as mind, should, in the knowledge of men, stand with these clear, primary facts of our experience, facts that may receive a thousand explanations, but are never dimmed or lost sight of as phenomena. They lie low and firm, the solid ground of being, never quite hidden by the mists of speculation that spring from them. Such is the speculative basis for the real being of matter and mind, their practical basis is the undivided sentiment of men which is to be explained, not contradicted, by philosophy. Let philosophy cease to make its facts, and give its attention to those really present.

CHAPTER III.

The Being of God.

THE fundamental fact in religion, outside of man's constitution, is that of the being of God. Morell's assertion is not far astray. "The germ of religion lies in feeling—the absolute feeling of dependence."* The object of this dependent trust is God. The necessary, unchanging point of spiritual contact between us and God, is this of complete dependence on him, alike for what we are and what we have. Our starting-points are given us by him, and our acquisitions are made under conditions which he establishes and sustains. Out of this unmistakable fact, if we believe in God, springs the entire circle of religious sentiment, and from this the outer circle of religious action. Our apprehension of his character in its relation to our own defines the precise feelings which he calls forth, whether those of delighted trust and love, of sweet repose and hope, and lively desire ; or of fear, repressed activity, and gloomy forebodings. Dependence ranges either way. It rises upward in buoyant reception, it strikes downward in sterile apprehension, it remains at rest in a sense of safety. God, by the magnitude of his being, annexes our life to his life ; the form and coloring of his life fill out and tint our existence.

The initiatory truth of a religious life is the being of God. The ability to establish this truth turns on the very fact in the human constitution with which it correlates, our freedom, our moral being. Freedom and the ethical law involve each other. The law is an absurdity, a misappli-

* *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 90.

cation of ideas, without the freedom which it properly addresses, the powers that render fulfillment possible. The freedom, on the other hand, is given by the opportunity of choice, the true alternative to all adverse desires, the sufficient make-weight against sin, which the spiritual insight of the soul into its own, its law of life, imparts. One *can* choose between holiness and every form of gratification. There is between them a deep-seated diversity which precludes the reduction of the two considerations to one standard of pleasure, to a joint estimate of opposed enjoyments and a casting up of the balance between them, a calculation of advantages issuing in a line of interested action—action checked perchance for a moment by the complexity of circumstances, but never for an instant involving election. There is defeat or victory always in the ethical sense. It is present in each instance to win or to lose. It is not entangled as one factor among others, as a consideration blending its influence with other considerations, and sure to assert itself in the product according to its weight among complex causes ; it rests in poise over against all other motives, and offers a choice which can not be escaped, a parting of paths that cannot be overlooked. When pleasure is upon its side, that pleasure is thrust in the rear, and bid be silent.

This liberty is the upshot of the moral nature ; and this liberty, this spontaneity exercised under the alternative offered by the moral sense, is that in man's constitution the knowledge of which brings home to him the proof of the being of God. Without this sense of freedom, deeply grounded in its own nature, the mind cannot be carried over to the recognition of an Infinite Being, the free, the independent source of all things. The initial idea is missing, or so obscured as to be inoperative. We wish to make this fact very plain in the present chapter, that

religion is grounded in liberty, since its first truth, that of a Supreme Being, can be established only in connection with human freedom.

If what so many are ready to affirm be true, "Either law or chance, these are the only alternatives," there is possible no satisfactory evidence of a Divine Being, and religion drops away. The writer from whom the above words are taken proceeds to say, "For the modern thinker there is no middle course. It is either symmetry or confusion, law or chance ; and between the two antagonist conceptions there can be no compromise."* We would rather say, there are two forms of action, the one necessary, the other spontaneous ; chance is opposed to both of these, and, as a fact, has no existence, and no acceptance with the mind. A necessary action is one fixed in time, place, kind and degree by forces already in existence. All physical action is doubtless of this character, except as initiated by spontaneous action. A spontaneous action is one which springs from power disclosed anew in it, power that had no previous existence in any known product, power not actual but potential, power not transferred in strict correlation from product to product, but springing up afresh in each. All purely intellectual activities are of this sort. The power employed in running through a proposition is not identical with that expended a little later in recalling an event, or in weeping over a sorrow. None of these states is contained as an expression of force in some previous state, from which it has come forth by strict transfer. The mind within limits, and under certain varieties of activity, is an independent, potential source of power. The nervous changes which accompany this power, and restrict its exercise, express a parallel series of forces, among which doubtless there are exact actions and reactions, nicely ad-

* Popular Science Monthly, Jan. No. 1873, p. 376.

justed effects and causes, yet a series that by no means determines the intellectual states concurrent with it, nor is, in any known way, their counterpart. The intellectual, spontaneous activity glides forward along the physical groove provided for it, and, in the friction of its progress, accepts the law of causation; but, as intellectual strength, its putting forth is conditioned, by the presence of prior forces, neither in kind nor degree. We do not think by compulsion, thought is not incident to a shifting of forces,—though the reverse is true, and a shifting of forces is incident to thought—nor can our thoughts, when once called forth, be set any other limits than those given by our spontaneous, mental power. The nature, direction and vigor of thought, are not settled by a destruction of brain-tissue, though a change of tissue accompanies each determination by the mind of its own states. In other words, the mind, as immaterial essence, is sufficient to its own phenomena, as immaterial experiences; and finds in each of its products a primitive expression and measure of its power. Power, in this sense, is strictly spiritual, belongs exclusively to mind, and differs widely from force. We interchange the words, and speak of the power of a lever, and of the force of a thought, only in a figurative way. There is what we call force, always lodged in, connected with, certain physical agents; there is what we may call power, that issues afresh from the mind in every effort; has no sensible, physical results; but is able to take, in some unknown way, the initiative in the interplay of physical forces, and so direct them. We must, in this discussion, discriminate sharply between thought as thought, and the cerebral activity that accompanies it. The one lies wholly on the mental, the other wholly on the physical, side of our being. We need also to watch carefully the words we transfer from the one set of facts to the other,

recognizing the necessity of a fundamental change in their significance.

As the entire structure of religious faith rests on the idea of spontaneity as opposed to that of necessity, we need to draw with a firm hand the division line between them. Intellectual power is distinguished from physical force in its form of existence. Force is definite in quantity, is local, is always in one way or another in exercise, however obscure and latent the form assumed, and hence is realized once for all, and equally at all times. The correlation of forces contains as a thesis these conclusions. Power within certain limits is irregular in quantity, has no local existence, and replaces itself under its several forms by unequal substitution, not by exact transfer. These are the conclusions contained in the belief in mind as potential being.

Force and power are also distinguished in the grounds of their exercise. Force, to the extent of its being, must be in exercise. It has in itself no possibility of increase, rest or diminution. Its visible effects depend on the other forces it encounters, but it is driven outward and onward by its own unalterable nature. Its whole movement is a push, it is always conditioned by antecedents definitely established in the past. These are at least the conceptions under which science shapes and studies forces. Power, modified also in its effects by the conditions under which it acts, is drawn forward rather than driven outward. The influences at work attract rather than impel it, seem to lie before it rather than to crowd upon it from behind. The motive has no realized, localized force which it can and must expend; the inquiry, no included impulse by which it drives the mind through it. The mind, by its own desires, invests the objects of pursuit with their power, neither has the desire in turn any defined, physical fulcrum on

which to rest its lever. It is not an appetite, but is incited by some intellectual vision, a conception which the mind has shaped of a good and its means of fruition. Neither is the vision necessarily a product realized in and for the mind by fixed antecedents. It has sprung more or less spontaneously from its own restless yearning impulses ; from the kindling fancies which mark the mind as a generative, independent power ; from hopes that quite transcend its experiences, and struggle with that experience as something to be wrestled down. How often does the spirit shape a glowing image, tint and retint it each day in the face of gloomy, stubborn facts, and put forth constantly renewed effort for its realization ! The activity of intellect is begotten under an interplay of its own powers to which external facts assign conditions, but which they fail to define with anything like causal force. From these two distinctions, that power lacks definite being till the instant of its putting forth ; and that it is drawn into activity by its conditions, not driven into it, united to its impulses as motives by super-sensible, intangible connections, there follow other distinctions.

There are to the powers of mind, whether of thought, emotion or volition, no exact lines. They do not as forces in each instance reach defined bounds which they can neither fall short of nor exceed. It is not easy in any instance to carry them to a point which can not be passed, while all grades of exertion lower than this lie open to them. They present the appearance of irregular action, graded by a variable spontaneity, responsive to external conditions, but not inclosed in them. The fixedness, the exact proportion and equivalence of physical forces are lost. The power has its range, its direction, given in itself, but within this constitutional, potential limit, plays with fluctuating efficiency. These fluctuations find more

or less light cast on them by the external conditions of action, but these conditions only evoke a power and do not supply a force, give an occasion but do not meet it or unlock physical efficiencies that must meet it. This certainly is the first appearance of the facts of mind and their common spontaneous interpretation ; they must hold their ground, therefore, till overthrown by full and explicit proof. Hence the explanations of rational action rise above the category of causation, and fall into that of incitement, persuasion.

This variable efficiency of powers removes the possibility of prediction from their action in any absolute form. If we contemplate the conditions under which the powers of an individual are called into activity, we can form only an uncertain judgment of what his precise character and grade of efficiency will be, and this uncertainty increases as the intellectual and moral elements in him gain ground. Nor is there sufficient reason to suppose that this is due to our very partial knowledge of the genetic conditions and conditions of environment in each case operative. We are getting no arithmetical hold of individual life ; our calculations take effect only in reference to numbers sufficiently large to eliminate personal variety or power under an average of chances. Though we can approximate the number of crimes that will be committed in a given community in a given period, we can not predict who shall commit them. We have escaped the personal factors in the one equation and not in the other ; and hence the first admits of a solution that does not belong to the second.

Shakespeare, Bacon, Newton present an individual element which nothing in their parentage or nationality or locality serves to explain. Why each expended his power in a given way, may in part be made clear, but the source of those original gifts is inscrutable. The word, *gifts*, indi-

cates this. Genius in any form is not a product to be compounded by the most subtile organic or social chemistry. This assertion does not deny a genetic dependence, but only a complete and exhaustive one. The proper name, Milton or Goethe, remains forever the final designation of an underived, unweighed combination of powers. Something of the same uncertainty attaches to an effort to calculate the exact exertions which any person will put forth under given circumstances. The results in any one case easily transcend or easily fall below our estimate, shaped though it may be by a long observation of the complex powers under consideration. We are again thrown back on a doctrine of averages, which is simply an elimination of variable elements. In any other method a personal, inapproachable residuum of purely subjective states is present to disappoint our expectation. We are taught that a power is not graduated to fixed results, is not present in arithmetical ratios. That a calculation of chances is a constant accompaniment of social philosophy, is a disclosure of a pervasive potentiality. The necessitarian, far from priding himself on these results, should see in them a confession of his weakness.

From this peculiar nature of power, which we express by the word potential,—whose very existence is an indication of the validity of the idea which lies back of it—it follows that the reference of a product to a power is in a measure final. We trace effects from one cause to another in perpetual assent; we refer rational acts to rational agents and so arrest the explanation in its regress. If we wish to make it any more complete, we do it by giving the environment of motives. Hitting again, in these physical conditions, the trails of causes, we may pursue them in various directions. Such inquiries may cast light on the circumstances under which the personal power was called

forth, but it, in its spontaneity, remains the central fact to which all influences converge, at which they diverge, redirected in a primary, independent way.

Force, as perfectly and exactly realized in all its transitions, must have a locality, sets of phenomena which are each moment its expression. Hence force is exclusively physical, working by fixed products, in which it is resting or through which it is passing. Power, on the other hand, is purely spiritual, pervades no locality with its self-existent facts, and starts them from no local germs of force, but establishes them only under that evanescent, changeable type of being we term consciousness. When power combines itself with force, thought with action, the one yields the entire substance of the product, the other its form—the shaping idea whose presence we can discern, but whose method of efficiency is a mystery. There are many midway blended facts in which force and power meet and obscure each other, but in wide and close observation the two elements are not easily lost sight of.

Power or spontaneity is, according to this conception, in reference to physical forces, acting in a fixed determinate method ; and in reference to chance-action, spasmodic action, without antecedents or fixed limits or continuous development, a third thing. It stands with force as productive of order—though order of its own kind—and opposed to chance, which is a universal negation of order. The question is resolved into this one inquiry, Is there in mind potentiality, power that is not realized, but may be any moment realized within a certain circle of experiences ; power, therefore, that is a variable factor in reference to the being who puts it forth, power of which that being is neither the precise embodiment or the transient medium but the independent source ? We answer this question in

the affirmative for many reasons, which we can only briefly enumerate.

Such spontaneity or power must underlie intellectual activity. A connection of thought is one discerned, not one compelled ; one that is understood as a subjective attitude of the mind toward a subjective conception. If comprehension is a real, genuine act, it is comprehension ; that is, an activity elicited in the mind by purely spiritual, intellectual considerations. To induce such an act by physical forces that lie back of it, is to destroy its character.

Spontaneity must also underlie intellectual activity, if we are to have any stock into which to graft liberty, any ability, when an alternative is offered, to accept the one branch or the other. A power centered in itself, going out of itself, and that according to no external, necessary law, is the condition of liberty. But liberty is universally ascribed to man, and the actions that fall to it claimed of him. The moral law, government, society, and individual character rest upon it, in fact the order and beauty of the entire spiritual world, as a spiritual product. It is involved, moreover, in the immaterial, insensible quality of motives. They have no force, no physical connections, by which to make themselves efficient ; nor can they, in their intellectual form, be shown to address any local seats of appetite from which such an efficiency can be gathered.

Again, the power of thought or of volition, when put forth, is not a realized, physical force. Whether it shall touch such forces and guide them, depends on external conditions, and nervous conditions, which are no part of the mind's constitution, necessary as they are to its effective action.

The growth of mental powers confirms this opinion. They are open to indefinite increase, and that, too, under circumstances which put at their disposal no new physical

resources, but rather straiten those in possession. The growth of the mind passes quite beyond that of the body, and often continues during a decline of its forces. Physical strength decreases, the appetites give way, the senses are dimmed, still the mind, and above all the moral nature, embarrassed indeed by the falling off of these their servants, hold on their way with more depth of insight, more breadth of conclusion, more charity of sentiment.

Language is full of this idea of potentiality, history is full of it, daily life is full of it. The might-could-would-and-should, the may-can-and-must of our existence, present and approaching, are the larger share of it. We even reflect this potentiality, which belongs exclusively to ourselves, into the external world, when we say of some anticipated time, It may rain. No, there is in nature no potency for two results. It certainly will or will not rain. We bring the statement as a possibility, a wavering fact, before our minds only as a familiar rendering of our own potencies. We find the doubt, which lies alone in the action of our minds, a stimulus to collect all the grounds of a prediction, a prevision ; to stretch our powers up, if possible, to the limit of insight. Failing of this, we accept the uncertainty, and provide for a contingency. If our knowledge were an exact product not to be extended, and our preparation its precise equivalent, following by necessity from it, lacking potentiality, destitute of possibilities either of excess or deficiency, we should cease to reflect our uncertainty of knowledge on physical events, and move on with them in the quiet of a fixed experience.

Nothing can eliminate this potentiality, and reduce rational life to the staid certainty of physical forces, save a philosophy of religion which overtakes as a blight a few minds within a limited circle of opinions and experiences. No one ever thinks, speaks or acts, can think, speak or

act, in perfect consistency with the doctrine of fatalism. We would give this principle of spontaneity, so incorporate in the mind that we can not escape its practical recognition, its true position, its real limits, as against that other idea, causation, equally but not more persistent. It is not strange that one who decries causation should also reject spontaneity, for they are both referable to the same intuitive action ; but it is most manifestly partial and inconsistent to accept the one, and ground universal law upon it, and to exclude the other, its compeer in origin and office. We can not reject one uniform impulse of the mind while we give way to another ; nor leave these impulses to destroy each other.

Do spontaneity and liberty, its fullest manifestation, exclude order and hence social science ? These ideas modify science in its application to society, as we constantly experience, but do not thrust it out. We would substitute for social science and the science of history, social philosophy and the philosophy of history, as indicating the new and less determinate powers with which we have here to deal. A knowledge of mind and of those activities which are shaped by it is philosophy rather than science. We are not studying fixed forces, nor tracing their necessary lines of action and reaction. We are inquiring into spontaneous powers, and fixing the limits and conditions of their exertion. Here are order and law, but law and order modified by the subject-matter dealt with. Here is honest induction, for it takes the facts for what they purport to be, and marshals them in that line.

A mental power is conditioned or restrained in two ways, but in neither of them with absolute bounds. Its general form and quality as a power are assigned it in the original constitution of the mind. Neither thought nor emotion nor volition can become something other than

itself; nor can in all degrees transcend its wonted limits. The mind is restricted to these endowments with variable strength. The limitation is not complete, because each faculty lies potentially in the mind, and the actual thought, emotion or volition, in any given instance, is referable to that potency. It has sprung anew into being, and was not conditioned in its presence, form, degree, by previous realized forces, which must needs find expression in it. A spontaneity, a potentiality, attended it on its very birth, and went with it in its every manifestation.

A mental power is also conditioned to the occasions which evoke it. It can not create these, nor immediately modify them. These occasions are complex, and open various paths. Any of these the mind may enter. Of divergent and redivergent ways, it may select as it will, but one or other of them must engage its activities. In choice,—the fullest exercise of spontaneity, the point at which it passes into liberty—the alternative is furnished the mind by external conditions, and, within the limits granted under the selection offered, restricts it completely. We can only take one or other of the things open to our election.

It may be thought that this notion of spontaneity blurs the definition of liberty. Liberty can not exist without spontaneity to underlie it, and minister to it. If there is no power of origination, then the alternative involved in choice is delusive, and the mind, already subject to fixed forces, is conditioned to one result, though to which of the two is for the moment hidden. If choice can not avail itself of the spontaneity included in thought, emotion, it has no method of executing its purpose. Spontaneity differs from liberty only in going forth under a single sufficient impulse instead of standing between two incomparable, uncombinable impulses, and deciding between them. Choice must be grounded in the general power of the

mind, or it would stand as an isolated, impotent form of activity, without fellowship with the mental faculties, or power to control them. These would then hold on their predetermined way in spite of one erratic spontaneous act. The spontaneity expressed in choice must be able to lay hold of and direct the spontaneity which runs through the entire intellectual life. Without spontaneity in execution in the parallel lines of thought, feeling and volition, freedom in choice would be utterly barren. The fixed forces of thought would take up their own issues, and flow on beyond the reach of volition ; as do the laws of nature.

Liberty gives room for philosophy if not for science, a philosophy which shall trace the rise and progress of history without interlocking its events with the iron grapple of a physical sequence. Given minds, men of defined characters, are manageable and in a measure calculable elements, though they carry reserved powers, and reserved principles of action. When we deal with men as contrasted with things, we have occasion for new and more flexible forms of proof, yet a proof which furnishes sufficient guidance, and puts in our hands practical power. Always, when we leave the domain of pure ideas, we lose demonstration ; yet make for ourselves a feasible way by probable evidence. In the case of matter, we may arrive at so exact a knowledge of its properties as to approximate certainty in our conclusions, even when dealing with specific facts. In the case of man, a wider experience brings less safety to our judgments, yet so defines the range of liberty as to yield us principles of action, and establish a philosophy of life. What this philosophy lacks in fixedness, it more than makes up in elevation ; in the germs of possibilities which it holds, and the grounds of influence which it offers. We may grow into society, grow with it, forecast for it a career, because its life like

our own life is full of potentialities, the spores of spontaneous powers floating in the intellectual atmosphere as the seeds of new developments. To work with these limited unlimited powers, these defined yet free impulses, is philosophy, a philosophy that by so much transcends science as it differs from it. If it forfeits the dead certainty of mathematical formulæ, of iron and of adamant, it puts in their place a noble vision of things that may be.

We are now to trace the dependence of the proof of the being of God on this conception of spontaneous power in man. The *a priori* argument is so unsatisfactory, and so lightly held, that we may pass it at once. It infers the actual being and eternity of God from the ideal necessity of eternal being to the conception of infinite attributes. It thus accepts a connection of ideas as a proof of facts.

A second argument is that from effects to causes, from causes to a First Cause. This is sometimes called the cosmological argument, the argument from the universe to its First Cause. Every thing in this argument depends on our definition of a cause, on the source whence our underlying analogies are derived, from man or from matter. If our conception is that of physical causation, as it is likely to be, and as the force of language urges it to be, then our proof must entirely fail of its conclusion. The reason why this argument has so long met with acceptance is, because of its ambiguity, because the words, *cause*, *First Cause*, have covered a vague, expansive notion, inclusive of intellectual power as well as physical force. If we bring causation strictly down to its own physical type, if we define it in the light of material facts, it is obviously unable to furnish any connection, any transition, by which we can pass over to an infinite or primitive or personal being. The difficulty is this. An effect immediately contains, precisely measures, fully expresses, a cause. This

is the law of physical causation. If, therefore, we reason from the universe now existent to a cause or causes as contained in it or implied by it, that cause can not, by the slightest fraction, transcend the effect, the universe itself. If we were to allow the cause to overstep the effect, we should do it to the overthrow of the very conception of causation, the conception which sustains our argument, and carries it to its conclusion. By this action we can indeed reach a second, a third, a fourth point or era or epoch or æon in time, each holding intact the cosmos with all its forces, but we can not, in any one of them, find the least addition to these forces, any thing that at all transcends the final product, that has not once contained it and is not now contained by it. If we were to make such a discovery, it would be in subversion of our premises, our cardinal axiom, the negation of our every connection, something starting up outside our causal law. Under causation the last product is, in some sense, the greatest, since evolution, combination have made visible the order from the beginning hidden in its forces. In passing backward, we gain nothing in the volume of facts, in their visible glory we lose much at every step. This is the first difficulty. The cause, the First Cause, if we so choose to call it, interpreted by physical facts can not transcend the effect. The universe forever lies back of the universe. A change of form is admissible, but only under an absolute and eternal equivalence of force. The river can flow on, it can neither increase nor decrease, nor be found something at any point other than it has been at every point.

The second difficulty is like the first. There can be no First Cause, such as the argument calls for. The cause proximate to the effect under discussion is the immediate cause, and this considered simply as a cause, demands a second cause, this second a third, and this third

a fourth. To arrest this movement at a thousandth, a ten thousandth, cause, and pronounce this a First Cause, is either to allow the furtive entrance of a new idea, alien to the argument, or to destroy the proof by which we have gone thus far, to strike out the steps by which we have climbed thus high. If any one cause requires a second to sustain it, every subsequent cause institutes a like claim, as we are dealing with a simple, invariable, primitive conception. If any cause at any point, no matter how remote, can dispense with a causal dependence back of it, then of right does every cause near and remote fall apart, and the rope we have moulded in the sand dissolves away. The First Cause of this cosmological argument is something very different from every other cause with which it deals, and is, to that degree, something begged or borrowed or stolen from we know not where. What the fact of causation, considered alone, proves, is, that there is no beginning, no increase backward or forward, no bird's eye view to be had of the stream that floats us on; that there are no fountains whence it issues, no ocean whither it flows, but an endless rolling onward more or less rapid, a perpetual, untiring evolution.

Some philosophers have rightly, under this idea, striven by hypothesis to bend the flowing stream into a circle, and map the weary circuit by which it returns into itself. This theory yields the happy alternative of rest that the mind seeks for! Under the notion of simple causation, forces flow into themselves, swallow up and renew their own work. If we can find no indication of this, we must look forward to a final dead-lock, when the universe shall have run down, have burned out its fires, and extinguished its tapers, and gone to rest in the darkness and forgetfulness of an endless night, a winter's night, half the forces fled as radiated heat, and half at a tense push and pull in death-

like equilibrium. Causation can only deal conjecturally with beginnings and endings, or rather it can allow neither, and is best satisfied when it bends round the two till they meet and cancel each other, and the universe as a whole falls into a measured orbit, an exhaustless rhythm of change. All that causation can put back of change is further change, all with which it can surround present being is past and future being, on either hand conditioned to it. If the current of its events is at any time checked, it is simply held fast in a gripe of force, as a river arrested by freezing. Nothing is annihilated, though little comes of the intense and sluggish strain of balanced forces.

A third argument for the being of God, is derived from the adjustments of means to ends, the marks of intelligence which the world presents. It is the teleological argument. The forms of matter in quality and quantity are so fitted one to another, so unite in an orderly and beautiful cosmical structure, are bound by an interplay of properties into such wise and complete laws ; the life that springs up under these laws is so sheltered by them, so conformed to them by organic constitution, by instinct, by incipient and developed intellect, as to disclose, in the fullest possible way the insight, oversight, and constant direction of mind. The world is full of that kind of order which denotes intelligence, and from this the argument proceeds to infer a supreme, intelligent architect. We have no criticism to pass on the transition in proof, from a product apparently permeated with thought to an intelligent agent. This proof, however, calls for a more careful inquiry into what is involved in intelligence ; as to what form of being is sufficient to satisfy the words, An Intelligent Creator.

This argument rests for its analogical support, and for the interpretation of its language, on the intellectual character of man, and the relation of his works to him. We

reason from implements of war, from ruined cities, to the existence of a race of men who shaped the one or built the other. Certain adjustments of means to ends bespeak the presence of man, and establish his agency. But what is the intelligence whose existence is thus proved? We must go to our analysis of human powers for our answer to this question. What man is, that intelligence is. If we rank him with physical forces, if we condition him like them to the circumstances which accompany action, if he is only the highest and most subtile of the combinations evolved in evolution, or, if you will, of the forces added in cosmical growth, then a product that discloses intelligence can carry us no higher than this our sole type of spiritual life, our defining term in the argument. Man's works lead us to man because they disclose that peculiar combination of means and ends which belongs to him. We reason from that which we term intelligence in the product to that which we have known as intelligence in the agent. But if we have decided that that intelligent agent whose relation to his works suggests and sustains our proof is strictly a necessary and physical knot of causes, in each and all his kinds of activity ; that he is simply the highest, that is the most complex, term that nature has reached ; and that, in spite of his own fancies to the contrary, he is wrapped up, body and mind, with the system of which he is a part, when we construct this our philosophy, we must be willing to accept its results. Consciousness, the play of mental phenomena, give to the necessitarian no arrest or modification of pure causal connections ; no more than the shadows in a stream alter the nature of the stream, or affect its physical conditions. Hence nature is not by one iota transcended by intelligence, by the high-stepping reason conceded to man, and which is now to be made the basis of our proof of the being of God. Without spontaneity we

are no better off when dealing with the world as orderly, complete, beautiful, than when we regarded it as a mere series of events, a combination of effects. The intelligence out of which beauty and order spring, has been defined as itself a cause in its essential nature, has been included by its law of receiving and transferring influence with other causes, and is no more able, therefore, than the simplest among them, to transcend its physical connections, or to become a point at which we may pass to a Supreme Being above this interlocked, self-sufficient, unbroken existence. We are reasoning from a wise and thoughtful product to an intelligent agent, but an intelligent agent is, according to our present philosophy, one more complex centre of forces, one more transition term in the meeting and parting of causes. The light of consciousness, it is true, plays about these wonderful foci of fire, but it modifies nothing. It is only ambient flame incident to unusually high, varied, concentrated activity.

We grant then, freely, that an Intelligent Creator is shown to be the source of a fitly devised creation. Let the theologian be satisfied with the formal features of his argument, and gather up its results as verbally sufficient for his purposes. If, however, we are told that these results reach to the extent of a free, personal, infinite Intelligence, known as God, we must at once demur ; such a conclusion flagrantly transcends the premises. These recognized intelligence as a necessary force, at one with physical forces in the law of its generation and action ; in place of this there is now put spontaneity, a conception, under the philosophy so far accepted, utterly unknown to us, and never admitted by us, though its presence was inferred from no matter what display of thought and volition. We grant the existence of an Intelligent Being, but of one that is intelligent according to known standards, not one

that is separated from intelligence, as hitherto defined, by the whole diameter of his being.

Intelligence belongs to the brute ; its action is full of it. Nor is that portion which is unconscious and organic any less full than that which is attended with consciousness. The same is true of man. His voluntary action has less wisdom in it, less complete fitness, than his involuntary action. Yes, it may be said, and this is the reason why we seek an ulterior reference of the wisdom of organization and instinct in man and the animal to a superior, creative, conscious Intelligence. Yet why should you do this, if after all you gather the conscious and the unconscious actions of men, their organic and their intellectual activities, under one law, and make them both necessary ? On that supposition, one of these forms of action is not essentially different from the other ; man is equally and only a medium in both ; in both he sinks to the level of the stream, and is a part of it. If we refuse to refer a thought, a purpose, to man as ultimate, but simply look on them as the products of his native forces and conditions, then we have no motive and no reason on which to refer all-wise action, in a final way, to an All-wise Being. We can not so lift ourselves bodily above our premises. What man is, that God must be. Here are wise actions ; they purport to be those of man. We decline to acknowledge them to be his in any deep, final form. We put them in origin back into the physical universe again. We deny that there is in him spontaneity ; we take up his actions afresh, and trace them to the causes and conditions which have evolved them and him alike. Refusing to allow him to explain the world, we insist that the world shall explain him. We submerge him in matter once more, and so are satisfied. We can do no better by God when he shall come to us under the like image.

Under this philosophy there is no distinction between an organic and a voluntary act as regards their relation to existing forces. Both are accounted for in the same way, both are transitional states, changeable mediums in the interplay of activities. Hence, when we gather up the order of the world, and refer it to a Supreme Agent, that Agent can be to it only in turn a transitional medium ; and we ought to be equally satisfied if he is this in a conscious or an unconscious way, in an organic or a voluntary form. Man is the key of our system, his powers the type of our argument, and in him we have learned to identify voluntary and involuntary action, physical force and intellectual power. What kind, then, of an intelligent being emerges under this teleological proof, when guided by the philosophy of necessity? We think, most philosophically the universe itself, as an organic, conscious, unconscious being. If we were to put any second being back of it as a Creator, whose intelligence was of the order now fixed upon as belonging to mind, as explaining mind, this ulterior being must himself be locked up in new causal connections of some sort, must wait as an anomaly outside the universe till the net-work of forces is cast over him ; and far from bringing light to the problem of being, must himself be the chief difficulty in it. He could only be a second unwieldy quantity, added to quantities only too unwieldy already, something in kind and make-up like that of which we now have more than we can explain—an elephant under our earth with nothing whereon to be planted. We suppose, in these objections, the necessitarian to be consistent with himself, and not to have one philosophy for human, and quite another for divine, intelligence ; not to quietly accede to spontaneity here, when he has so staunchly denied it there.

Much better than this is it to say of the universe, that

it itself is organic, that it reaches consciousness in man, that our God is identical with the forces and the laws everywhere working in and by him, even as man is the sum of the transitional forces which he contains and expresses. Thus our Deity is at one with the intelligence we have recognized, at one with the intelligence whose existence is to be explained, and becomes the appropriate inclusive term for those causal agents, into whose keeping we have committed all things. Logically, under the teleological proof, we can reach nothing higher than this, unless we reconstruct our argument, restore spontaneity, and so attain a power above physical forces. The whole outward aspect of the universe comes in to strengthen the pantheist—made so by the doctrine of necessity—in his conclusions. The wisdom of God runs as it were in the grooves of law, of those instinctive, necessary tendencies which express organic and unconscious, as opposed to what we call voluntary, action. The wisdom and power of God seem to be lodged as a germinant centre or centres in the cosmos itself. There is little indeed which can be addressed to the senses merely that is suggestive of conscious, external, spiritual oversight and intervention.

This teleological argument breaks down, not because it does not reach intelligence, but because it has already debased intelligence, included it among necessary forces, put it in strict dependence on previous, blind agents, rendered its connection with consciousness a secondary feature, and so throughout unfitted it to afford a true beginning. The beaver is intelligent, his action is intelligent, whether the fruit of device or instinct or organic adaptation; for each of the three phases are alike forms of coherent, irresistible forces. The degrees in which they strike up into consciousness are quite secondary

considerations, since consciousness is a light incidental to activity, not one that determines it to a new form.

A fourth argument for the being of God is derived from man's moral nature. It is the ethico-logical argument. This proof is based on the moral phenomena of the world, the sense of right, and the anticipation of reward and punishment. In this argument, as in the previous one, every thing depends on the philosophical interpretation we give to this branch of our constitution. We are endeavoring to show that without a clear recognition of spontaneity, there is no sufficient basis for theism, a belief in a personal God. Those who deny liberty, or identify it with necessary, causal connections, can not consistently recognize the right as an ultimate, an intuitive, law. Such a law is wholly out of place unless it is accompanied with the power of obedience. The ethical sense, as presenting an independent, primitive inducement to action, and thus constituting with the appetites, passions, tastes, an alternative which affords the grounds of a rational choice, is itself an integral part of our freedom. If we reject the spontaneity which is to avail itself of this opportunity of selection, we have no logical escape from rejecting that intuitive law which is wholly fragmentary and powerless without it. Hence the ethics which goes with the doctrine of necessity is that of utility, a resolution of the right into a perception of the useful, and the feeling of obligation which accompanies it into a sentiment sedulously inculcated by society, and established by social and organic transmission. Hence our moral nature is only a branch of our intellectual nature, and no better conclusion can be arrived at from the one than from the other, as we look off from these heights of our being in search of God.

This is very plain if we scrutinize closely our premises. We started our lines of proof with cosmical effects of any

character. With these we could mount no farther than to other cosmical effects of like character. We were hemmed in to the path of physical causation, physical forces. We then made a second effort to rise, choosing our effects, selecting those which contained a manifest intellectual element, and hoping to pass thence to a true spiritual being. We fared no better than before, because our philosophy had robbed mind of spontaneity, and presented all its activities as the play, though the latest and noblest play, of causes. We therefore gained nothing in our transfer, we were still under the same fatal physical connections. We could, if we chose, infer intelligence, but intelligence itself had become for us enclosed in nature ; as crystals are enveloped in the saturated, secreting fluid. We now start a third time and select the moral nature of man as the highest attainable eminence. This is our last effort, yet it can avail no more than previous ones, since we have no fundamentally new premise, are in fact on the old ground. A law evolved and enforced by experience, transmitted and strengthened under it, till it becomes an inwrought constitutional tendency, a secondary product of intellectual powers, fixed and necessary in their development, can give no new light, can not rear a torch so high as to show the whence and whither of a spiritual soul, as to disclose a Creator enthroned above and beyond his works. From like to like is still the method of our proof, and a moral nature in God, such as the one now disclosed in man, would only be the slow establishment, the steady coming to the light in him of the laws of use incident to things and to his own activity under them. We have no real forecast, no absolute freedom under it ; we are painfully yet necessarily, with indefinite jostle and friction, shaping our actions to the exigencies of the facts about us. The consciously anticipatory and

voluntary portions of the adjustment are illusory ; nothing is real save the fixed, underlying forces around which these intellectual images play, and which by themselves and of themselves are reaching a perfect equilibrium, a complete interplay, with other forces. Any vision of freedom and responsibility which arises in this evolution may operate as a vision, as itself the expression of a graded and settled force, but by no means implies any correspondence of the invisible, final facts with itself.

Such a moral nature we may, if we please, transfer to our Deity, but it can not lift him any more than it lifts us above the cosmos. It must rather identify him with it, as itself the product and expression of natural forces. We are thus pressed down to the low level of causation without the slightest upward bent in the path we are pursuing. Nor, indeed, have we any occasion, in our ethical premises, for God, a personal and free being beyond nature. Nature is dealing with us stringently and successfully. The moral constitution of man and society, as now laid open, presents nothing beyond the range of physical forces. Showing nothing but necessary effects, it requires nothing in explanation but fixed causes. A Deity enthroned over such a world is a superfluity. Present facts are all traceable to previous ones, and these to others beyond them. This retrogression is the delight of the causative impulse in man. It seeks nothing more, and can make nothing of anything more, if it is given it. Thus, if we test the ethical argument in its intrinsic strength, it fails. Or if we allow it to succeed, it still fails by not knowing what to do with its new, strange, outside factor. The explanation of nature offered by the being of God is beyond the range of all the conditions of thought present to the philosophy under discussion, since that philosophy excludes spontaneity, origination. A free being would find nothing which he could

do in a universe ruled by complete, inexorable law. Law is omnipresent ; it excludes all along its progress the intervention of personal power, and equally excludes it at the outset. The outset and the issue must be one in method, or the one in reference to the other becomes anomalous and abortive ; involves principles that have been sedulously excluded.

The Deity reached by this argument is necessarily the God of pantheism. The view of Schleiermacher is the conclusion which consistently flows from a purely causal interpretation of nature and man. Wisdom, goodness, holiness in God mean simply the causality in Him which produces these attributes in us. Absolute power means all power ; God, as the absolutely powerful being, is the only cause or the sum of causes. The world is the substance of which God is the life, the pervasive, controlling force. There is in man a God-consciousness, that is a consciousness common to God and man, a consciousness which contains the highest evolution of the spiritual nature of each. The intelligence of the world, whether present in nature or man, in a physical law or a spiritual perception, is the divine intelligence, defined in each instance by the very fact which expresses it, and pushing forward to its highest development in the human soul.

A belief in such a Divinity does not transcend the premises on which it has been made to rest under the doctrine of necessity. By a pure causal connection the universe is evolved out of, contains and is contained by, its Creator. The very essence of this notion is that the effect and the cause exactly measure each other, that the cause is to be regarded as the invisible force, the inherent noumenon, which inlies, sustains, and successively unfolds all effects. Such a Deity is homogeneous with his acts, in each instance reaching the measure, and in no instance exceed-

ing the measure, of what he is doing. He is also in harmony with man, for his form of being and measure of power are, like those of man, wrapped up in those grand causal connections which pervade all being. Such a God is most intimately united to man, as man is his highest development. Both together touch the light in consciousness. The God-consciousness is the common consciousness, and the spiritual expression of both alike. Such is the coherence of pantheism, such its logical development from its initial idea ; yet how utterly nugatory are the moral impulses which it is able to furnish.

But can not origination, liberty, be assigned to God even though denied to man? No ; for various reasons. If all man's action can be explained by coherent forces, if thought, volition, inspiration are with him an expression of fixed, immutable laws ; then thought, volition, inspiration may everywhere, no matter what their compass, be so referred ; nay, as one in kind must be so referred. Intelligence is one, whether it be that of man or of God, and if it be causal in the former case so must it be in the latter. The relation of intelligence to law will be identical without regard to the being whose it is, since the word expresses a specific conception brought to our notice in man, and interpreted by what we see in him.

Moreover, if we reason to the being of God, expounding the relation of the universe to him, its adaptation of means to ends, by what we see in man's action, then we can not infer any other intelligence in God than that which in man calls forth and sustains the argument. It is this exact form of intelligence in man which leads us to infer intelligence in God, and the intelligence inferred, therefore, must be in keeping with that with which we started.

If spontaneity is an absurd conception in reference to man ; if it is a denial of law, an acceptance of fortuity, it

will be equally so when applied to God. If man can not originate, can give no absolutely new impulse, because of the inherent impossibility of the conception, neither can God, for the same reason. We can not relegate an absurdity to the Deity, having rejected it from the constitution of man. God must be at least as rational as his works. Or if we grant liberty to be an admissible element there, we allow it also to be one here.

If our philosophy admits no explanations which do not rest on immutable law, and contemplate its universal reign, then, if we grant spontaneity in God as a necessary condition of creation, we shall none the less not know what to do with the new conception. We have ruled the idea out of science, out of knowledge, out of order, because it enters in to arrest all exact thought. We can not, therefore, place a notion like this, the logical equivalent of chance, at the beginning of all things, as the comprehensive, inclusive term that is to bind them up in rational comprehension. We must, in some way, recognize origination as an orderly fact, a resting point, an integral term in the universe, before we can exalt it to the highest of all positions, and make it the root and norm of all things. We must find something like unto God before we reach God, or we shall not, in our thoughts, attain unto him; he will remain to us an anomaly, an absurdity. This likeness of God is man; in his image we are made. Philosophy insists on it as strenuously as inspiration. To whatever point we drop man, to that grade of being must Deity drop. Infinity does not transform, it only extends qualities. If we start with causal dependencies, and the absolute reign of law, we must carry them with us all through. God sinks into the universe which he utters, and which equally utters him. Man, as a personal power, is lost in the forces which flow through him; and with him goes

down the only type, is extinguished the only light, that can disclose and expound a spiritual universe, resting as a spiritual heavens above this crass, cold, physical framework of things. In our own measure is given the cubit of the sanctuary. Every estimate of the mind, restricting its powers, reduces the reflection it offers of the divine nature, circumscribes its knowledge, and narrows its inheritance on every side. If, as many are ready to affirm, it be a question not pertinent to the case, "Is the will free?" and one that should be set aside by the inquiry, "Are we free to do as we will?" then, by this transfer of freedom from mind to body, from its seat in the soul to the external conditions of action, our whole spiritual constitution, and the constitution of the spiritual universe, of which our constitution is the type, is shaken, and, riven through its lofty arches, begins to crumble. Overthrow overtakes the central span, slipping its base and crashing down through every secondary support. The too ambitious structure collapses by its own weight, and discloses, in the completeness of the ruin, the insufficiency of the device upon which it was reared.

Those who, striving to strengthen the decrees of God, or lengthen his foreknowledge, allow these conceptions to subvert human liberty, in so doing lose the very majesty of the power they sought to defend. The glory of God's government is its strictly free spiritual character. Infringe on liberty, and that government sinks to a physical basis, and God becomes a semi-vital, semi-intellectual force; a demiurge, descending lower, and rising no higher, than man; a soul of the universe whose laws bind him down like chains of adamant; a formless impersonation of physical forces, that lies half-crushed under the weight he sustains; a painful aspiration rather than a glorious inspiration, laboring, panting upward in the yearnings of the

human soul, so remote from good. As power slips from man, it slips from God as well, and the universe becomes the residuary legatee of us all.

There is one other proof of the being of God sometimes offered, that of intuition. It is said to be "simply the utterance or attestation of the soul in the presence of the object, which it does not so much discover by searching, as apprehend in the act of revealing itself. It is not an argument, an inference, a conclusion. It is an attestation, the glimpse of a reality which is apprehended by the instinct of the worshipper, and through the poet's vision as much as the gaze of the speculative reason. It is not the verdict of one part of human nature, of reason or conscience, the feelings or the affections; but of the whole being, when thrown into the poise or attitude of recognition before the presence of the self-revealing object."*

The article from which this assertion is taken contains a very able discussion of the proofs of the being of God. We should have felt constrained to acknowledge a large indebtedness to it, had we not in a prior article, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, given the gist of the discussion now offered. We are reluctant to disturb this view of a direct intuition, yet it so far differs from the constituents of faith yielded by our analysis, and seems likely to have so slight a hold on the mass of minds, that we can not put aside the desire to restore the lost elements in the proof. It is not intended of course that God is visible to the physical eye, nor in vision to the imagination. Have we, then, an intuitive power by which, without inference, we apprehend spiritual being? And can God be made the object of this inner vision? We do not even see ourselves, or know our own spiritual essence; our most intimate friend is hidden from us; yet is God, as a real entity,

* Theism, *British Quarterly Review*, July, 1871.

nearer to us than either? There are intuitive ideas involved in the satisfactory establishment of the being of God, and the inferences under them are very simple and direct, so much so as to be made by the mind familiar with them almost unconsciously; but there they are, and correct analysis must always disclose them. We seem to see the distant tree, and pronounce directly on its locality and size; yet the rapidity of our conclusion does not cancel the judgments it contains, or remove it to the category of pure intuitions. When the feelings are awakened by a sense of God's love, his overshadowing power and spiritual presence, the inferences by which we have arrived at a knowledge of him may be sunk out of sight, and out of thought; we may seem to possess the most personal, complete and undeniable attestation of his being; we may say in the fullness of faith, We know that he is, and that he is the upholder of those that trust in him; yet this flooding of the soul with conviction, with those affections which are its immediate fruits, does not alter the sources of proof, they conform to them, and flow from them. We see, indeed, easily and perfectly by having seen often, but the constituents of vision remain the same. The reality of the sunrise glory we rejoice in, and still rest on intuition and experience; neither support can be removed.

We start the proof of the being of God—the mingled intuition and inference—with the doctrine of spontaneity. There are thus recognized two classes of events in the world; those that demand for their explanation a previous event made up of equivalent constituents of force, which have been passed over to the fact before us; and those which are referred to a rational agent, looking to nothing back of him. In spontaneity there is an arrest of force, in causation a transfer of force. The one fact measures the impulse that gives rise to it, the other reveals, without

compassing, the power which has brought it forth. Lines of thought are beginning, volition is disclosing fresh strength, every moment ; within us, on all sides of us, are true potentialities. Pure intelligence, pure emotion, pure volition, are of this spontaneous character, finding a sufficient and a final reference to mind, a true beginning in the human soul.

This fact is taken as the initial idea of our argument, the explanatory principle we bear with us, in threading the universe, and confronting its problem of being. We have found true origination in man, the origination of thought, the initiation of action. On this idea we are able to rest, going backward ; with this to start, going forward. We see intelligence, a universal, pervasive adaptation of means to ends, in the world about us. It is not found simply in single things, in detached series of events, but in the entire make-up of the globe, its elements, their properties, proportions and spontaneous products. This intelligence, instructed by our philosophy of man, we refer also to a true and sufficient origin, to a personal God. We are reasonable in making reason as an objective product proof of reason as a subjective power, a personal power, a form of being distinctive of it. Thus the wisdom of the world, which is the world, drops out of the mind of God, and discloses momentarily and everywhere his personal being. We carry our conclusion precisely as we carry the conclusions of hourly life. The proof may well enough be, therefore, more plain to the common mind without analysis, than to one who has analyzed its data and missed their true elements. The moral nature of man, and the moral government to which he is manifestly subject, lie as proof in the same direction, and establish with equal strength the moral nature of God.

Thus the Deity comes before us as he is presented in his works, with the intelligence and ethical temper which

these disclose. God is a God above nature, for we started with a power not subject to nature. Lodged in the human soul, thought and volition have ruled over and wrought with the physical forces about them, yet more may they do this, lodged in the divine soul.

Neither is the Deity, whose being we have arrived at, the mere equivalent of nature, the term in force which balances the phenomenal member of our equation. The form of proof is much the same as in the teleological or ethico-logical argument, but the conclusion measures its breadth by the breadth of the premises. No thought or labor of man exhausts his liberty, or spans his potentiality. Hamlet, Macbeth, thirty-six dramas, are not the equivalent of Shakespeare. There was in him the possibility, certainly, of farther, perchance of better, production. From Hamlet alone we can infer a mind whose scope is not to be definitely set down, a power whose works must be waited for rather than predicted. A product in itself quite limited, gives rise to a boldness of inference and sanguineness of expectation, when man is the subject of calculation, quite beyond the disclosures of that first effort. Milton's potentiality is greater than the Hymn of the Nativity. From a universe like this which surrounds us, we legitimately infer boundless resources, a potential hold upon forces which makes any universe possible. The potentiality of such a product is what we understand by infinite power, as no limits can be set to a strength which in a single putting forth runs through the stellar world, yet gathers up every subordinate fact in a planet like our own ; which weaves in all order and all beauty as the constituents of its effort, the inevitable on-going of its work.

It may be urged that we have no proof that any physical force is begotten of man's spontaneous power, and that, therefore, we have no right to refer physical forces to

like spontaneity in God. We are certain that the will of man does, in some way, so touch the forces of the world, as to initiate for them lines of action ; so start, direct and check them, as to put them at his disposal. If this be accomplished solely through the medium of forces already realized in our physical constitution; it matters not. Power is still potent as regards forces, though the method of its efficiency is unknown to us. We may certainly, then, attribute to God a control that includes all forces, and the more so as these forces, in the very law of their action, in their quality and method of combination, are permeated with intelligence. The thought and the force are so interwoven that we can no more separate them than we can the physical and intellectual elements in human speech. We are not, moreover, arguing under causation, but under the rational reference of intelligent action to an agent ; and this conception gives us scope and freedom. We may enlarge our conclusions on various sides, guided therein by the more adequate explanation thus given to the facts under consideration. From a single invention we infer in man and society an intellectual state of a given grade, and transcend every way our premise. We justly ascribe to God all that control of forces which his work indicates, though it surpasses in kind, as well as exceeds in degree, that which belongs to man, or that which is present in the product considered. We are dealing with intelligence, liberty, large and elastic conceptions, and this is the pre-eminence of our proof over that which rests on the utterly rigid, barren idea of causation. For this very reason it is that we insist on the necessity of the one notion and on the incompetency of the other. The facts expounded by causation find no pause, no comprehensive term, till they are united with the higher class which springs from volition. Will alone is an integer, a starting point, a finality ;

causation is a perpetual flow, a stream without fountains, a race without a goal, an explanation that is lost the moment it is made, a circuit of balls that is maintained by returning each to the air the instant it is caught. Comprehension is only possible when the two conceptions are united, the details of interior relation assigned to the one, and the compass of out-lying boundaries left to the other. Spontaneity, and this only, can be enthroned above the universe, and give rest to it, and rest to the mind in contemplating it. Here is a beginning, and from it there can spring a compass and a conclusion. In causation, there are partial plans, details of execution, but no edifice, nothing which the mind can put together, round out, and say it is complete. How long the thoughts will delight themselves in these mere fragments of truth, these restricted, explanatory processes, these shreds of order, it is difficult to say, but plainly the final disappointment will only be the more complete and bitter on account of them. Threads of thought that run forever on and lead us no whither, most of all weary and distress the eager mind.

The argument, then, for the being of God is most simple and direct. Believing in the spontaneous power and fruitfulness of the human mind, and guided by this light which comes from within us, we place the fact of a universe, centered in wisdom and radiated every where by it, full of rational life and even now ruled by ethical law, on the one hand, and over against it the conception of God, a personal being, the adequate source of this creation, and we feel that the two are mutually sustaining, involve and explain each other. Infinite power and complete wisdom are the elements included in such a product, and such a product without these in a personal source, remains an insoluble enigma. Because the conception interprets the fact, the fact proves the conception, and adds it to itself

as another fact. This is the finality of all proof. We accept a cause merely because we have an effect ; the footprint in the sand brings with it the man who made it. The mind will accept nothing alone, its logical continuity will not allow it. Some second complementary fact is involved in a first fact. The complementary fact of a universe is an Infinite God. His infinity, his power are put in counterpoise with this great weight, and sustain it. So peace is given to it, and to the human mind. Rationality is nothing more than this, the insight of the mind into the conditions of being ; and this is its insight, this its self-justified conclusion, as regards the origin of all things. The act is not different in its principles, nor more complex in its details, than that by which I infer the being of the friend at my side. God walks in the garden, and we hear his footsteps, and listen to his call.

This connection is so natural, so necessary to the mind ; its belief in its own liberty, that it itself is a primary power, is so inwrought and complete, that men have reasoned under the notion of naked causation, and from this barren conception, by an interior expansion of it inevitable to the free spirit, have arrived at the idea of God. The conclusion was not in the premise, it was in the human soul. The mind went beyond its verbal statements, transcended its formal data in behalf of primitive convictions, and an inborn sense of power. Only a few materialists, here and there, have been able so to keep down their words and humble their thoughts, as to reach, as they logically ought to reach, a demiurge, hidden in the universe and burdened by it as a structural carapace. This has been possible as a feat of logic to Hume, and a few others ; a nobler inconsistency has belonged to divines and most philosophers. They have believed in God even when they have found no rightful throne on which he could be seated.

They have accepted, under the clear insight of reason, what they have formally denied under the logical statement of favorite dogmas, under their analysis of mind. The bleak, desolate path of proof has come to an abrupt end; the spiritual nature has furtively unfolded its wings, and with a sudden sweep risen to its true elevation, and sought its true home in the bosom of God. Nor does it seem unfit that the fundamental truth in religion should rest back in proof on liberty, for what are the commands and what the incentives of our spiritual constitution without the power to follow them?

The foundations of interpretation, belief, are laid in the human soul. This is their security; they may be cast down for a little, but can not be permanently subverted. We can only be true to God as we are true to ourselves; or believe in him for what he is, as we believe in ourselves for what we are. Divine origination turns on man's spontaneity, the two conceptions rise and fall together; and we find God at the same time that we find the power to love and obey him.*

We have striven in this chapter to give in their bearings on theism, the true out-comes of our beliefs concerning man and nature; and we think it to be established as a logical impossibility, that any proof can be secured for the being of God without the initial idea of liberty. We give these results, not that our philosophy may be forced into one mould or another, but that we may know what we do believe, and what are its corollaries. It will be no more possible in metaphysics than in mathematics ultimately to take the proposition and reject the scholium, and the quicker we save ourselves the effort the better. Our scholiums will be accepted by others, if rejected by ourselves. Let it not be thought that our proof is too

* Hume's works, vol. I, p. 227.

precise, and narrows the Godhead. The Infinite includes the best, the highest, the most personal ; but finds no measurement in it. We feel no reverence which prevents our assigning all that we have to God ; our reverence does give him a compass of being quite beyond it.

CHAPTER IV.

The Attributes of God.

IT is the intuitive action, the rational grasp, of the mind that renders it capable of explanations, that leads it to seek explanations. It evokes and rests in reasons by virtue of the same powers. These powers lead it to supply the idea of a free, intelligent, and hence personal, being as the origin of the universe. But in order that this being may remain the complete and final fountain of all existence, he must be at once infinite and absolute in power. This arises from the necessity of the case, from the nature of the explanation offered to the universe by the being of God. Theoretical causes are made to exactly correspond to the known effects seeking resolution, and find their proof in a precise equivalence. We believe that the strata of the earth's surface first indicate and then establish the past existence of certain conditions adequate to their production. So God, in his attributes, must be commensurate with the purpose for which he is evoked by the mind. His attributes rest, for their logical necessity and proof, on the same ground as his being. He must be, and he must be with powers proportioned to the explanatory

office he fulfills. The being and the attributes are inseparable parts of our proof, at least so far as these attributes are necessary to make him the sufficient source of all things. Hence God is eternal, and infinite in power. If he were finite in duration, the reason which leads the mind to seek for him as God would compel it to go in search of another. If he were limited in power, those limitations must arise from forces external to him, beyond his reach ; or from an internal weakness, incapacitating him for certain efforts. In either case he ceases to be that fullness of being which is to the mind ultimate. The restrictions of his nature require a further solution, and the mind is again thrown back in search of a true Infinite, an Existence that is not drained by an exigency, nor taken up by a product, nor its limits reached by an accumulation of finite measurements ; that does not itself sink into the finite and dependent in explaining it. Thus the question of power is put at rest precisely as is that of space, when, moving freely in the stellar universe to all distances, we say of this, its enclosing condition, it is infinite. Any other supposition issues in new perplexity.

It is involved in infinite power that it should be absolute, that is independent, in two ways ; neither restricted from within nor conditioned from without, save by its own activity. Man, as finite, is not more straitened in the amount of force which he can command, than he is in the results of that force by the external conditions under which he must employ it. God, as the personal, ultimate source of force, puts it forth into a void, and suffers no limitations, no reactions, save those which he forecasts and frames for himself. The reaction is as much his own as the action. The conditions which he meets are his, are those shaped to this very end by a coëxistent, rational purpose.

It is strenuously urged by Spencer, that the infinite is a pseud-idea, an inconceivable term, which eludes all pursuit, which, in its highest form, we can at the best only designate as the Unknown. We briefly reply, that the universal and perfectly intelligible use of the word, by him as by others, is the best of all contradictions to the assertion. One conception of the infinite after another could not be set aside, if there were not attending on the criticism a higher and more complete notion, in behalf of which each in turn is rejected. The very assertion, that neither this nor yet this is the infinite, implies a latent conception of the infinite, and a comparison between the two. We grant that the infinite is not in any of its applications an object of imagination, nor of judgment; and is, therefore, not, in the narrow use of the words, conceivable nor thinkable. But the infinite, as in space or in time, is referred by us to an intuition, and ought not to be manageable by the imagination, working under the forms of the senses; nor by the judgment, proceeding under the idea of likeness and unlikeness. Not only must the infinite, as when applied to space, be pronounced a familiar and satisfactory notion, it is one peculiarly clear and intelligible. We speak safely of a thousand miles, and employ the conception exactly and correctly, but stretch out those miles by land or by sea; push downward with them into the depths of the earth, or pass upward with them into the heavens, and the imagination gives us but the most vague and inadequate image of them. They are, as expressing any concrete thing, thoroughly inconceivable. This fact in no way limits our use of the words in any of the diverse ways in which we wish to employ them, nor our reaching conclusions by their means of mathematical accuracy. Compared with these, and a hundred other concrete statements of constant and careful service, the idea of the in-

finite is most simple and complete. Consider one point in space ; how utterly undefined is it in position ! Consider a second, no matter how remote from the first, as being its exact counterpart, equally undefined, and we have the notion of the infinite fully involved and clearly evoked by the insight of the mind. The fact that a transfer of a thousand miles has not, in reference to space, altered one single relation, that the one position can not be separated from the other, save as we keep them both in mind, and so establish a contrast between them, discloses at once the absolute irrelativity of each point in space, and hence the boundlessness of space. There are no references within or without it, save as we establish them by taking positions ; and each position falls into an infinite void. Ruskin finely says, " That which we foolishly call vastness is, rightly considered, not more wonderful, not more impressive, than that which we insolently call littleness ; and the infinity of God is not mysterious, it is only unfathomable ; not concealed, but incomprehensible ; it is a clear infinity, the darkness of the pure, unsearchable sea." *

Spencer, in an article in the *Popular Science Monthly*, says, " I fail to perceive humility in the belief that human thought is capable of comprehending that which is behind appearances ; and I do not see how piety is especially exemplified in the assertion that the universe contains no mode of existence higher in nature than that which is present to us in consciousness. On the contrary, I think it quite a defensible proposition that humility is better shown by a confession of incompetence to group in thought the cause of all things ; and that the religious sentiment may find a higher sphere in the belief that the Ultimate Power is no more representable in terms of human consciousness

* True and Beautiful, page 11.

than human consciousness is presentable in terms of a plant's functions."* Such is Mr. Spencer's rebuke of Mr. Martineau for a want of reverence. At the risk of shocking this type of worship, that hides its Deity in a shekinah of clouds, darkness and ignorance, in place of one of inapproachable glories, we must still be permitted to look upward along the clearest beam of light that comes to us, with the devout belief that it, above all others, issues direct from our God. We may consistently affirm, as Spencer may not affirm, that the Infinite overpasses on every side both our conception of him, and the revelation that is in the facts which disclose him to us.

We reason to personality, to potentiality. We see how vastly the facts of intelligence and goodness in the world outstrip our measurement of them ; we also remember how immeasurably the wisdom and love of God go beyond this single, incomplete utterance of them, an utterance perplexed by moral problems whose extended bearings we poorly apprehend, and, with a faith that has definite direction, that is to the soul a compass, we sail forth into the boundless ocean of being, waiting on larger light ; not more blessed by what we have than by the promise of what we are to have. If we reasoned only from causes, if we had humbled mind into a plexus of physical forces, we too should prefer a blank, the blank labelled the Unknown, to a being so fatally limited, so fearfully known, as must be the Deity, standing as the last term to this chain of proof. As it is, the best we have is certainly for us a better sacrifice than no gift ; Infinite Wisdom and Love a more devout ascription than the Unknown, of whom it is impossible to affirm, notwithstanding our worshipful capital and the inference we suggest by it, personality, that he transcends humanity, or even expresses any form of real

* No. 3, p. 322.

being whatever. Is it not the absurdity of reverence to withhold from the being worshipped—though it may well enough fall to such reverence to deny worship—substantial existence of any kind? This is a transcendentalism that effaces utterly the steps by which it ascends, and so is unable to say whether it has gone up or down in its alleged progress.

Quite another class of philosophers, represented by Hamilton and Mansel, declare the infinite to be incomprehensible, and relegate religion to faith as its true foundation. Its incomprehensibility is still made one with its inconceivability, its transcending of the constructive powers of the imagination, and requires no farther consideration. This entire perplexity concerning the infinite is the fruit of the false philosophy of Locke and Hume, reducing all knowledge to the type of sensation. Instead of the philosophy disproving the infinite, the infinite disproves the philosophy. We must decidedly, however, object to seeking foundations in faith for dogmas that have been pronounced without support in reason. Faith must have a rational ground or basis, or its objects and sentiments become superstitions. Religion can be purged by reason alone. We are quite content to accept mingled insight and feeling, as a complex rational state by which we reach conclusions quite impossible to pure thought. The coloring of thought is feeling, and without feeling we may miss the most essential part of the thought. Hence a faith which springs from an emotional realization of the truth, which grasps it at once on its intellectual and living side, may carry us forward to conclusions quite beyond the scope of logic. The spiritual convictions, the aroused life, of the soul become premises full of the highest and most pregnant proofs. But to remand to faith what has been rejected at the tribunal of reason is a

very different thing. This is to divorce feeling from judgment ; and to set up our last court of appeal in the former aside from the latter. This is to subvert the order of our powers, and to commit the sceptre of reason as against reason herself to the unanalyzed, unguided feelings. No confusion could be greater. We may well cease to consult reason if she is no religious oracle, if the holiest truths offered us are beyond her reach. Mysticism at once has the field. A reason that mounts into the light, winged by thought and emotion alike, is one thing, and a reason that flutters in the darkness, and must finally be taken in its feebleness and blindness under the tuition of the feelings, is quite another.

In addition to this primary inconceivability of the infinite there are urged farther objections by Mansel against the absolute, the infinite, as incapable, when granted as conditions of the divine being, of allowing a putting forth on the part of God of any intelligible activity. "The Absolute can not be conceived as conscious, neither can it be conceived as unconscious ; it can not be conceived as complex, neither can it be conceived as simple ; it can not be conceived by difference, neither can it be conceived by the absence of difference ; it can not be identified with the universe, neither can it be distinguished from it." *

The ground of this difficulty is double. Mansel forces upon the words *infinite*, *absolute*, in their application to God, a metaphysical fullness that we are not inclined to accept. He says, "A mental attribute, to be conceived as infinite, must be in actual exercise on every object, otherwise it is potential only with regard to those on which it is not exercised ; and an unrealized potentiality is a limitation. Hence every infinite mode of con-

* Limits of Religious Thought, p. 79.

sciousness must be regarded as extending over the field of every other ; and this common action involves a perpetual antagonism. How, for example, can Infinite Power be able to do all things, and yet Infinite Goodness be unable to do evil ?" * We are bound in thought by no such rendering as this of the infinite in its relation to the attributes of God. Nay, we are bound rather not so to use it, since such a use makes the result incoherent, contradictory, absurd. God is not necessarily infinite in his attributes in any and every use of the word, but infinite only with that infinity, if any, which involves perfection. The perfection involves the infinity, not the infinity the perfection. The attribute exists first, and that infinity is predicated of it which is applicable to it and consistent with its relation to other attributes. If it admits no infinity, or admits it only in one direction, very well ; we are not called on to thrust an arbitrary definition upon it. Space is infinite in one way, time in another, and power in quite another. To speak of power as infinite in the same way as that in which time or space is infinite is an absurdity. Infinity in power covers potentiality ; potentiality is the enveloping mantle by which alone power can become infinite. Power as realized is necessarily finite, precisely as the universe is finite. The fixed term in each case is the attribute in its own nature, and this defines in what form, if at all, it shall receive the adjective, *infinite*. We would accordingly say of goodness that it is perfect rather than that it is infinite, as found in God ; since completeness is the idea consonant with it rather than extent. Infinite power, in a rational, worshipful use of the words, does not require that that power should be to the full each instant in exercise. Potentiality is an essential feature of personality, and potentiality in personal power

* Limits of Religious Thought, p. 79.

takes the adjective, *infinite*, under its own limitations and interpretations.

Mansel, in like method, argues, that the Absolute can not be a cause, since a cause is put instantly into relation and limitation by an effect. Again we answer, we define the absolute by the personal and not the personal by the absolute ; the adjective by the noun, and not the noun by the adjective. Man, as exerting physical force, finds that force met and modified in its effects by exterior forces on which and with which it acts. A reaction follows at once upon his action. When we say of God, the supreme person, that he is absolute, we mean that his activity determines all its own conditions ; that all being is put forth by him, and that he both gives and accepts the limits of his creative force. We are not bound to the contradictory statement that he, in the same act, establishes and annuls conditions. The Absolute is not without the restraints of order, but he assigns them to himself by his own rational, creative activity. To insist that God must remain forever absolute in his attributes, in the sense of being out of relation and limitation through their various activities, is to overrule by the force of an adjective absurdly applied, the very vigor and nature of those attributes to which it has been attached. No such conceptions are obligatory upon us. If we affirm consciousness of God as a necessary feature of the highest being, then we do affirm it, and God is no farther infinite or absolute than consciousness admits of his being. The attribute is the necessary thing, and not the degree ; the attribute can not be abolished by its own degree, but accepts the degree or quality or condition only so far as it is able to. An infinity or absoluteness that trenches on consciousness is a reduction, not an increase, of the nobility of God's nature. If God is good, he is conditioned to goodness ; if wise, then is he conditioned to

wisdom, and we mean this when we call him good and wise. If God is thoughtful and active, if he combines the two elements of power, complete knowledge and inexhaustible force, he combines them none the less under the limitations of personality, and this leaves him free to exercise them as he will. No compulsion is put upon him by their possession, making him the necessary organ of his powers. In this exercise *he* establishes those limits which his action as wise receives. It would be as rational to say, that it is a degradation of reason, that it involves connections and limits, as to say that it is a restriction put upon God, that he, as an uncreated, rational being, acts rationally, accepts and exercises his own underived powers, by choice puts order into them, and by them into all things.

The Infinite Person, a spirit, infinite, absolute, complete in his attributes, as each allows ; this is the ascription of our reason ! While the nouns, *person*, *spirit*, direct attention to the very substance of the conception, the essential essence of divine character, the adjectives, *infinite*, *absolute*, *complete*, expand the form and conditions of it beyond all human experience, and hence all exhaustive statement. We are indebted equally to the two elements for our conception of God ;—to the formal as to the real, and to the real as to the formal element—a conception that can unfold and enlarge and diversify itself endlessly without the loss of identity, essential integrity. As the cloud grows by the diffusion of like conditions, heaps itself up in towering masses, and darkens half the sky ; is frayed out again by the winds and drunk up by the warm and thirsty air, and yet expresses the same unchangeable forces that lie back of all appearances, beautiful or sublime, threatening or benignant ; so the thought of God is present to the human soul under many shifting images, all uniting to utter, yet never quite to disclose, his abiding attributes. These con-

ceptions come and go in our spiritual heavens, and express for us our present attitude toward the hidden powers that abide there, that gather and group, for correction, for guidance, and for government, the secret impressions, impulses and imaginations of the mind.

The rational formula for the attributes of God, reasoning upward from that which is highest in his works, is, *This* and more. Its two constituents are equally essential. If the *This* is not present, then is God for us nothing ; a something, if a something, utterly unknown. The argument before us will not allow this conclusion. The highest in his works express somewhat that is in the worker, in him as a constitutional element, an essential force of his being, for this is that which he has put forth in his labors. Nor will the proof any more accept the *This*, as all that belongs to a primitive, personal agent. The depths of potentiality lie back of it, and the second element represented in the word, *more*, becomes the indispensable condition of that growth and enlargement of thought toward God, by which he is to us the goal of our spiritual being, its comprehensive, inexhaustible term. Renan has happily rendered this feeling, "Does art, which like religion aspires to represent the infinite under finite forms, renounce its mission because it knows that no image can represent the ideal? Would it not vanish into the vague and intangible the moment it aspired to be infinite in its forms as it is in its conceptions? So religion exists only on condition of being very definite, very clear, very limited, and, in consequence, very open to criticism. The rigid, practical and special side of each religion, which constitutes its weakness, constitutes its force ; for men are drawn together by their narrow thoughts far more than by their broad ones." *

"From poetry we shall demand expression of that in-

* Religious History and Criticism, p. 44.

instinct of the infinite which is at once our joy and torment—at all events our greatness.”* Let us not oppose the poetical to the scientific, and so confound it with the fanciful and the unreal. To poetry we rightfully commit the highest and most profound and most absolute truths of our being. Religion is closely allied to art in resting like it on intuitive and deeply emotional conceptions. Religion is the most central, most productive, point in art, and it carries with it preëminently the same struggle after renewed, varied, enlarged expression, the same incessant strife between unfathomable substance and the variable forms, which, in the beginning seem to express it, and then, with slow transition, first to restrict and later to subvert and destroy it. If such are the conditions of spiritual growth, of the expansion of those germs of rational insight which are the glory and the consolation of our being, why should we quarrel with them, why, in peevish blindness, fret at and cast away the preliminary conditions of life. The stages of ascent, the rudiments of knowledge justify themselves from above rather than from below. The partial and incomplete, accepted as transitional, lose each instant their fragmentary and disjointed character. If we do not know, it will be because we will not learn; and we will not learn, because we need to learn, because we are vanquished by the earliest temptation of ignorance, to wit, to reject first truths as partial, inadequate, incomprehensible. So they are, but they can not otherwise be first truths.

Supreme power includes infinite, inexhaustible force, and complete knowledge. Complete knowledge includes complete holiness. Knowledge and feeling are inseparable in the higher departments of thought. They are the heat and light of the same activity. Ethical knowledge involves ethical feeling, and, therefore, to be complete in

* Religious History and Criticism, p. 165.

wisdom is to be complete in righteousness. The intellectual branch of being can not be perfect without a corresponding perfection in its correlative, emotional branch. To misfeel is to misunderstand. Thoughts and feelings like limbs unite in one trunk, and separately and conjointly share and enlarge its strength. The righteousness of God therefore is supplementary to his attributes ; these could not exist in their integrity without it. Perfect holiness seems the more fit expression rather than infinite holiness. It is a thing of kind and completeness, not one of quantity. Every action with God is permeated by that rational quality expressed by holiness.

These higher attributes, the universe, as primarily a physical product, and, as a spiritual product, inchoate and imperfect, feebly discloses. The purified soul reaches the conviction by the earnest forecasting of its own desires, by an intense realization of its own longings, and of the law of life and inspiration which these imply. For the clear enunciation and large disclosure of God's holiness and love we look to Revelation, the Inspiration of fervent spirits, and this is among the chief purposes it subserves. Righteousness seems to us to gather up and hold in subordination all the moral attributes of God. Justice, mercy, love, all find expression under the law of holiness, toward the ends of holiness ; are all based on the desire of holiness, that perfect character which, to the eye of reason, unites in complete harmony every capacity and every power.

Some speak of justice as if it were an absolute, independent, moral sentiment, demanding for its satisfaction a certain conjunction of reward and merit, guilt and punishment ; and upon this immutable principle they build their entire governmental system. We look upon justice as making claims no more absolute and inexorable than

those of mercy. Both receive their limitation from righteousness. The mercy which subserves the ends of character, of holiness, is wise, all other mercy is mistaken and foolish. Justice accepts the same law. To withhold punishment when punishment promotes holiness, and to punish when punishment simply inflames passion, are acts of the same low moral character; both are the substitution of impulse for rational purpose. If mercy may baffle justice, equally may justice baffle mercy. Justice breaks its bounds, inflicting punishment when forgiveness is able to open the paths of life. Love, that is wise, rational love, love with insight and forecast, moral love, is the controlling affection of a holy being. God is love. Justice, mercy, indignation, pity play their parts under love, present no absolute claims that may not be overruled. All absoluteness that is in them is given to them by the adoption of wisdom and love. God is as merciful as he is just, and just and merciful in obedience to wisdom. No sufferings stand as the fixed concomitants of ill doing, no quantitative pleasures are the settled accompaniments of obedience. Punishment in kind and degree is fixed by the exigencies, the moral state, of the person subject to it, and of those associated with him. Punishment is graded to a disciplinary and governmental work, and above or below that work is mischievous. The love of God issues from his own holiness, and issues in a persistent effort to impart holiness to others. So are the character of God and his government knit together. We arrive at this conclusion as contained in the perfection of his nature; we find nothing in nature to contradict it, and every thing in Revelation to confirm it. It is to us the inspiration of our most inspired thought, the light we have when nearest Heaven.

One complete attribute involves completeness in every

other attribute. Imperfection anywhere breaks the circle of perfect ministration, and brings in weakness and limitation everywhere. Not to give to God the highest we have, is to lose him ; not at once, perhaps, but by the slow and certain decay of thought.

CHAPTER V.

Nature.

WE have said sufficient to indicate that matter is, under the line of argument presented, to be referred for its existence and properties unreservedly to God ; that a rational explanation of it as the substratum of the universe calls for this. Increasing knowledge modifies our view of matter in two directions. The mind first conceives of it as mere material, indifferent, save by general adaptations, to the edifice into which it shall be built. The chief wisdom of the world is found in its arrangements, its constructive plans, and to these matter is looked upon as subjected by an outside, edificatory force. Science revolutionizes this opinion. Matter is seen more and more to contain within itself its own laws, to hold in itself those constructive forces which make the world a place of fixed activities, of creative, progressive work. Matter being given, in quantity and quality, the world is given, as a physical structure. The analogy of a building is seen to fail, and that of a living organism takes its place. Matter as matter, in its various forms and interactions, is constructive ; and the world was substantially made, at least in its physical frame-work, when its elements were brought into being, and placed in connection. Hence matter must

be referred immediately to God in its nature and properties, in its building efficiencies, or the very foundations of law, of beauty and of strength, are laid without an architect. If this were possible, any subsequent edifice that might be reared by them, or built up with them, would fail to disclose his presence, would be made to share the blind growth, the inherent order found to exist in its chief elements. Hence matter, as containing the wisdom of the world quite as much as its essential forces, is referred with a double necessity and weight of proof directly to God.

A second change in our estimate of matter, is shown in our increasing apprehension of its dynamic character. We start with a statical idea. Matter seems to us in most of its forms inert, dead, passive, receiving force, but scarcely putting it forth. Knowledge constantly modifies this view, till at length we regard its more quiescent, stubborn forms, wood, rock, iron, as a concentrate interlock of forces, forces in as immediate exercise as those of the compressed spring or the drawn bow. Gunpowder now becomes the image of matter; we have but to meet the right conditions, and out leap imprisoned giants. Even in irresolvable elements, we find forces that are constantly grappling with and holding close the most expansive energies.

The simplest form of force, that which we seem to ourselves best to understand, is mechanical pressure. Science has shown us that a large part of the forces held in matter can be transformed into, or at least be replaced in, equivalents of this kind of force, and thus find the most clear expression and definite measurement that belong to them as forces. The fuel that passes in the steam-engine from one form into another, yields, in the transition, a large amount of mechanical force. This change of chemical composition has been attended by an evolution of force. Force, therefore, in one or another form of exertion, seems more and

more to the mind to lie at the centre of comparatively inert properties. The fuel has become largely volatile, but in so doing has let slip a great deal of energy. Thus instructed by a constant transfer of passive resistance into active energy, we pass over to the other view, and regard matter as compressed, combined forces, and that its varieties express the number, intensity, methods of combination and of movement, among these forces, forces now close-bound and now enlarged, according to the phases of material existence which they assume. The deadest things thus contain the liveliest energies, and the liveliest things the laxest energies.

The province of our senses is invaded by this explanation. We take cognizance of motions rather than of things. Color and sound are wholly referable to forces as occasioning motion ; the sensations of heat, electricity, pressure, at once accept the same solution, till matter becomes to us simply centres of forces able to produce certain effects. The atom, as a dead material thing, disappears, as it can offer no proof whatever of its being, either to the senses or to the mind. In its place come variable, elective forces, capable in manifold combinations of building up many simple and complex molecules, which, themselves already intricate and well-ordered structures, enter as complete architectural members into the visible frame-work of the material world. Forces, the power to produce given effects, explain the sensible properties of matter, and receive no additional light from a dead, inert centre back of them. To the mind force can as easily be ultimate as matter. Matter, as a material something, lingers only as the survival of first impressions, crude, unexpounded sensations, when the material world seemed passive rather than active. As an inert nucleus disappears, matter goes with it, and force becomes the substratum of a simple assemblage of

energies. Force is the causal, invisible substance, and to put an unknown something beneath this is to place a cause under a cause, to destroy the simplicity and directness of thought with no gain whatever in its clearness. Till force intervened between matter and its properties, we had occasion for an inert substratum ; but this is now displaced by an active one. To insist on both is an illustration of the vicious tendency of putting back of an occult fact, one yet more occult by way of expounding it.

Reducing then our conception to its smallest terms, we look upon matter as centres of forces, modified in intensity, direction, composition, motion ; and we refer these forces directly to God. This is the simplest circuit of sense, of intuition and inference, most directly and completely satisfies the thoughts, and so has the proof which the mind gives to its own processes. The power of God momentarily underlies the universe, since force requires instant and constant sustentation, is an activity not an endurance, a dynamic not a static state. This, or a kindred conception, serves its purpose if it steadies the intellectual steps, or helps them onward. Ultimate views so lack what men are accustomed to call proof—which means little more in this connection than familiar, experimental steps—as to take away from many minds all pleasure in following them. There is a shallow empiricism which casts contempt on theories that transcend a concatenation of physical facts. Those who have no occasion to move conjecturally, thoughtfully, in a high sense rationally, above the level on which the facts themselves lie ; who feel no impulse to take a birds-eye view of the world ; who are content with the intellectual food nearest them, and confound all digressions and flights of the rational impulse with dreams and fancies, are so censorious and contemptuous in view of these conjectures which

the soul casts forth, seeking its own, letting down its net with faith into the invisible depths of this oceanic being which encompasses us, waiting on natural and supernatural, inspired and uninspired, suggestions, that we produce and pass our thoughts on this topic rapidly. Those who in their spiritual experience are helped by a theoretical view, gathering in and interlacing the lines of thought, will quickly catch it, and reconstruct it for their own inner uses.

These spider webs of speculation, by which the mind moves from one salient point to another, with all their lack of strength, play an important part in the life of every wide-ranging and earnest spirit. They stretch across the rifts of thought, unite things in conjectural solutions otherwise incomprehensible, strengthen faith, and often become, even to the slow-plodding steps of empirical inquiry, what the first light cord that spans a chasm is to the iron cables and iron track that shortly bridge it.

Before we pass from the nature of matter, and its immediate dependence for its forces on the energy of the divine will, we wish to lay a little stronger emphasis on what we do know—know about phenomena and the forces that sustain them. Knowledge that is accompanied with an image is to many minds more satisfactory than that which is divested of an image. The reason is obvious. It is more closely allied to the senses. The senses gain by constancy, by familiarity of impression, an undue preponderance, and they impart this to their shadowy counterparts of the imagination.

The senses have the start in the race of powers. They are the earliest, the most constant, the most practical, avenues of knowledge. Many forms of philosophy are confirming their ascendancy, and a relative authority is thus attached to their testimony which by no means

belongs to it. It also frequently happens that at those points at which our knowledge is becoming exhaustive, science succeeds in inserting one or two more phenomenal facts. This process is peculiarly satisfactory. Great light seems to be cast upon the subject, and we overlook the fact that the final phenomena, when we reach them, as we quickly do, stand in the same unphenomenal, and so far inscrutable, relation to invisible forces as did the previous ultimate facts which they have displaced. Whatever knowledge we may gain of molecules and atoms, we rapidly approach an ultimate in reference to which all phenomenal conceptions fail us; a point at which the senses and their adjuncts break down, and leave us a last fact, an inconceivable conclusion, a something quite distinct from the phenomenal series it brings to an end. When one body collides with another, and motion is imparted, it is not the included facts of the vibrations of particles that explain the phenomenon; its ultimate reference is to a transmitted force, a force which the mind supplies as the essential condition and radical feature of the problem. The phenomenal links, less or more, are nothing without this. This force is known, known without an image, and is that through which knowledge comes to the series of images strung upon it. Impressions alone are not knowledge. If they are, then the bewildering images of a fever are knowledge. What makes impressions to be knowledge are the places, the times, the forces by which the mind unites them into a coherent, permanent general experience. We do know forces in knowing their effects, and to desire to know them phenomenally, under farther images, is to mistake the inherent nature of the truth offered to us. It is surely a bewildered impulse that leads us to ask to know a thing in a way contrary to its own nature, to know what is not to be known in the

form in which we wish to know it. The force is known, known in the effect, exhaustively known there, according to its character. It is an irritation of the senses that prompts us to ask for more. Not to rest contentedly in an intuition is to refuse to begin to know, is to debase knowledge to a series of senseless and unsubstantial appearances.

Claiming, then, that we grasp one side and the more substantial side of the universe through the intuitions, as firmly as we do another through the senses ; that we comprehend it in its forces, periods, places, quite as much as through its phenomenal impressions, these being but the data for those, we ask, what are the purposes which nature subserves in its relation to us as intellectual and religious beings? We are far from assuming that the universe is confined in its rational ministrations to man. This portion of its service may be relatively trifling, but it is none the less to us that known portion by which we are to judge of its purposes. Nature is a fixed middle term between us and God, affording the conditions of independent and dependent action on our part. It puts possibilities within our reach, gives us paths which we can pursue. It places forces commensurate to our strength at our disposal, and offers all the physical, mental and spiritual conditions of a career. Nature is at once the putting forth and the withdrawal of God's power, the giving to us that which is needed, and the leaving with us that which has been given. It is the school of thought, industry, freedom. If nature were not given as a detached, fixed, mutable-immutable system of facts, the frame-work of our intellectual and spiritual life would be lost. The physical world, in its liabilities, its fixed laws, imposes action and gives its conditions. The world instantly becomes a discipline, one which, while it handles men with severity,—a severity, however,

not too severe, if we consider those who are the subjects of it—and holds them to stern responsibilities, stimulates and rewards them freely, and fits its motives to every variety of character, bringing the highest incentives to the highest minds, and bending with a narrow motive to craven, appetitive souls. If the individual often succumbs, yet the schooling is so thorough, so comprehensive, that the nation, the race, nations and races, are gathered in and united by it in the slow achievement, first of civilization, then of enlightenment, and so of life.

The universe, in its simple, initial forces and leisurely evolution, becomes the ground of knowledge. The human mind is thus able to range everywhere, backward toward the beginning, outward over the fluctuating, ever-expanded, ever-renewed waves of activity, forward toward the end which all things predict and hasten. The slow unfolding of the divine energy along lines previously indicated, and rigidly adhered to, is the condition of human thought, yields the measured, finite steps by which we go where God has been before us, by which we are from the beginning until now put in companionship and fellowship with him. The infinite power of God thus secures an appreciable development, fields in space and time over which it can be unrolled, and becomes to man the chart of his own and of the divine being. We touch not the bounds of any thing, we are every where lapped in God's infinite attributes, in knowledge, power, prevision ; yet we everywhere appropriate only such portions as we are able. For that which startles the senses, but only confounds the thoughts, the merely supernatural, is substituted that which brings a marvellous stillness to the ear, but a wide wandering forth of the mind along the ways, the records of divine work. God is not in the thunder nor the earthquake, but in the still small voices of nature.

The world does not merely address itself to man, as an active, free, thoughtful being ; it is also fitted to him as one who should know the will and ways of God. Nature is as full of the character of God as it is of his thought, and it yields its spiritual treasures slowly, only because we slowly acquire the power of discerning the ethical element, which always accompanies the intellectual one. The faithfulness, minuteness, completeness of God's supervision are taught in nature as they could not be otherwise. Universal law, that is, universal regulation, is the first truth of science. Every inquiry proceeds on the ground that the lines of order run in all directions ; that the orderly sequence and interdependence of facts are complete ; that there are no facts out of relation, and no leap from one series of them to another. This is the naked statement of the postulate of science ; it is emphasized to the eye by the beauty, the perfect finish, which attend on even the secondary forms of being, the snow-flake, the flower, the insect. The omnipresence of God thus passes from a dogma of the mind to a fact of the senses.

A secondary, less understood disclosure of character in the physical world is that of fixedness, coherence, adhesion. The links are all interlocked one with another, and there is a peaceful, continuous, unswerving pursuit of his purposes with God. Nothing is thrown out of its dependencies, and nothing is supplied by mere will ; will runs under and through and with reason, and reason passes on from the incipient to the complete by its own suggestions. What lesson is more in order to man than this ! What should be the form of his constructive life but this, the strength of patience, the sure convergence of measurable, finite, often feeble forces on their one work ! This is seen in the relation of efficient to final causes in the world. There was a time when men were quite willing to explain

construction by final causes. It was easily said of this and that, God so designed it for such and such a purpose. The particular event or construction was thus made to depend forward on the purpose, rather than backward on its historic antecedents and conditions. It was cut off from the general, generative plan, and made to rest exclusively on an act of will, a special, personal impulse. Such a method baffled science in its inquiries. Hence an opposite tendency has taken possession of many minds. Final causes are looked on with suspicion, and rarely admitted as satisfactory or exhaustive reasons of anything. The eye is habitually turned in the opposite direction, and the inquiry perseveringly put, What antecedent state gave rise to this especial development? Explanation is looked for in efficient, rather than in final causes.

In both views there is partial error. Nature combines them both. The principle of adhesion to data, to primitive and self-sufficing forces, whose steps of combination are all traceable, does not admit of a ready insertion of special adaptations, of detached, creative acts. The new must stand conjoint with the old. Thought must have its unbroken lines. The organ must be granted a history, interlocked with the history of the organism of which it is a part. On the other hand, final causes can not be excluded; efficient causes get no current, no direction without them. Whatever be the method by which these are shaped to those, it is manifest that they are so shaped. The initial forces are forces working toward ends, developing in these directions; not enlarging themselves at random. Chance evolution is not evolution, at best it would be here advance, and there retrogression. This development falls to lower as well as to higher forces, to chemical and mechanical movement, as well as to organic movement. The survival of the fittest, is but one among the nu-

merous conditions which determine progress, a movement toward the ends of order. Certain things are to be done with certain means in a certain way, and therefore each stage in the advance, each part of the structure, takes a double explanation, a historic and a constructive one. Each proceeds under the conditions of the other. Things are shaped by such and such means to such and such ends. It is impossible, and it is irrational, to exclude final causes. Take animal functions. It is the larger half of our knowledge to know the purposes which they subserve in reference to each other, and it is largely to aid us in this inquiry, that we search out historically their rise and relations. If we prosper a little, here and there, making our forces work blindly toward wise ends, we shall not so prosper as we should, if we would allow the light of intelligent purposes to fall on the paths of development by which they are reached. It is a sort of violence and wrench from which the mind, the representative of intelligence, cannot but suffer, this implication that the diffusive wisdom of the world is reached without wisdom, that lines of thought have no forecast in them, that light is the product of darkness.

It is by the constant presence and interplay of these two elements, the historical conditions, efficient causes, and the constructive ones, final causes, that God teaches us a patient handling of facts, a holding fast to what we have, a steady involution of it in higher and holier ends, the exhaustive use of the thing that is, instead of an impatient wish for the thing that should be.

A third spiritual lesson of the world, closely allied to this, is that of progress. Without attempting to make out any connection between the slow evolution of the physical universe and the character and attributes of God, this is plain. Were it not for this measured, progressive movement,

this accommodated step of the Divine Power, we should not be able to keep pace with God's wisdom, nor understand its work. As instantaneous it would be untraceable, the vanishing path of a thunderbolt. Neither should we be able to work with God, to unite our labors to his in a fellowship of purposes, to walk with him in hope. The progressiveness of his plans is their line of alliance with human powers.

Yet the fixedness of physical forces, their continuity and certainty, which make them subject to anticipation and supervision, do not pass to the opposite extreme of fatalism, and leave man bound with them under one invincible law, the slave not the master of nature. Man takes the initiative of government in freedom, high above physical forces, and so is able to introduce new conditions, and give new directions to old ones. Physical agents and laws are bowed to service without being broken, and bound by their very coherence into steadfast obedience. What would otherwise be the melancholy, terrible certainty of events, their inevitable, lethargic flow, is broken up by man's constant descent upon them with modifying power, and by the incalculable incidents which belong to the interplay of so many agents, a portion of them free. The world is as full of exigencies as of certainties, and results having to us the force of accidents, calling for instant redirection, are the issues of the most settled laws. Hence readiness, intrepidity, faith, patience, courage are as much the fruit of this discipline of law as forethought and industry. The physical world is everywhere flavored with fortune, though no one of its events is fortuitous.

There is also in nature a supersensual substratum, gliding easily into the supernatural. We penetrate to the bottom of the phenomenal, to the end of its sequences, and there encounter a something no longer amenable to

explanation in division, subdivision, interdependence and representation. It is so in matter. Each simple element yields an inscrutable force, true to itself, inexplicable to the senses, and the assumed unit for all later combinations. When we touch bottom in ultimate being, we do so in an agent that comes forth ready for its work, its commission given it in its own constitution, fortified by the invisible power of God, and as unsearchable and invisible as he. This energy is so far-sighted, so holds the keys of order, so works with untiring patience and growing wisdom toward creative order, that we come to feel in it, as in the works of man, the personal, spiritual impulse even more than the unconscious, imperturbable force.

Passing a little onward, we see in the crystal definite arrangement. This discloses a new force or modification of forces, another ultimate term of inconceivable and admirable efficiency, lying back of the veil, and giving us these beautifully devised products in the presence-chamber of the senses. The frost etches the window-pane. We observe the wonderful tracery and locate the forces that have wrought it as companions of the other insensible forces that inhabit molecules, and encompass us in a suggestive, spiritual way.

We move upward in inquiry and reach the plant and the animal with their complicated, definite, interdependent parts. Here are much more intricate agencies, working for more varied and extended results; a portion of which are much less easily associated with any atom or sets of atoms as their ultimate seat. We know not how even to locate this new efficiency which is expressed by the word, *life*; an efficiency which has grown by small increments, but has none the less reached astonishing dimensions; an efficiency that accepts development, but in so doing discloses rather than hides its marvellous nature. Put life

where we will, as a controlling power, in the living thing, and it must work equally where it is not; express it by what additional property we will, assigned to atoms, and it will still transcend our conception, strangely vary its action, and suddenly choose a new method, according to the part or the exigency which conditions it. Life seems to pervade its product, to comprehensively shape and mould it according to a preconceived plan, and yet to use physical forces only, having an independent being and law in the various constituents of the structure. Life is an invisible architect, so invisible and inappreciable among the processes that go on under its supervision, or in the properties that the materials employed display, that we miss it as a distinct thing in experimental inquiry, and lay open its very existence to denial. Yet this denial leaves the chief thing, the peculiar thing, in the organic world unexplained; leaves the order, the relations, the interdependencies—more curious than the material between which they exist—unaccounted for. We are told whence the stones of the edifice came, and who put them together, but no hint is given us of the origin or the plan of the structure.

Such men as Spencer and Darwin cannot leave the problem just here, willing as they may be philosophically to resolve the close connections of causation into the loose sequences of time. They feel the need of some kind of force, some located efficiency to perpetuate the plan in the living thing, and be the medium of its transmission from parent to offspring; to gather up and confirm the latent tendencies that have been impressed on the organism in insensible increments—increments so very small as to call for no precise reference, as to allow themselves to be conveniently disposed of under the word variation. How the mind struggles with the difficulty, the secret necessity laid

upon it, such words as these testify ; innate tendencies, intrinsic aptitude, hereditary proclivity, implanted instinct, reversion, atavism. Thought hovers around the subject, and knows not on what phrase to light, and accepts, more or less, mere word-dust, the whirling, airy involutions of speech in place of ideas. Spencer, pressed for a sufficient reason to explain the fact that a mere fragment of a Begonia leaf reproduces the entire plant, says, " We have no alternative but to say, that the living particles composing one of these fragments, have an innate tendency to arrange themselves into the shape of the organism to which they belong. We must infer that a plant or animal of any species, is made up of special units, in all of which there dwells the intrinsic aptitude to aggregate into the form of that species ; just as in the atoms of a salt there dwells the intrinsic aptitude to crystallize in a particular way." * This intrinsic aptitude he later endeavors to show resides in " physiological units," which are the primary organic compounds in the passage upward from chemical units.

In much the same vein is the theory of Darwin, by which he ascribes the organizing, reproductive power to gemmules, which are thrown off by all the parts of the animal or plant, and by which, as they pervade in exhaustless numbers the whole structure, is transmitted the right tendency at each exigency of the organism. So the inscrutable life-principle which has been driven out with a pitch-fork returns again in a form more perplexing than ever. We get rid of difficulties at one point only to reintroduce them at another in full force. This materialism denies a thinking mind, and then makes matter think ; as if our conceptions could be helped in that way.

How inscrutable the agency so lightly accepted in

* Biology, vol. I. p. 180.

“physiological units.” Themselves hypothetical in construction, in being indefinitely minute, they are thought each and all to contain the constructive plan of bulky organized beings, whose members may occupy years in receiving their complete forms, on which many offices, exact, complex and wide-spread, are to be impressed, and to which, in the later history of their development, there may be added the most subtile traces of remote, hereditary influences. In ordinary transmission, these units may disclose forces latent for generations; in atavism, they may resuscitate forces far down the backward slope of time, and restore a type lost by the stretch of an epoch. They may for a time completely waive a power, and later, as completely resume it, without reason rendered. In this child, they may pronounce on six digits, and in that, born of the same parents, settle on five, or divide the hands between the conflicting tendencies; and in neither case betray any vacillation. In these units, so diverse in tendencies, so decisive in action, so subtile in affinities, so distinct one from another in the same organism and in different organisms, we have many mysteries substituted for one mystery; many powers for one power. Are we not at liberty to say of such agents what Spencer says of divine interposition. “Those who entertain the proposition that each kind of organism results from such a cause do so because they refrain from translating words into thoughts. The case is one of those where men do not really believe, but rather believe they believe. For belief, properly so called, implies a mental representation of the thing believed; and no such mental representation is here possible.”* No claim could be more destructive of physiological units than this, that each statement must admit of translation into a mental representation. We do not,

* Biology, vol. 1. p. 337.

however, concede the claim any more than we concede the units ; and we now leave them in each other's keeping, not caring much which shall throttle the other.

We refer to these theories only to show how these men, reaching, or coming near, a substratum of supersensual agency, strive, without recognizing it, to turn back again into the phenomenal world, and that under suppositions which do nothing to explain the facts, and remove by one or two steps only the inscrutable power whose energy and reason are in itself. Judged by the criteria of conceivability, intelligibility and experience, which Spencer is so fond of setting up for his opponents, what advantage has this doctrine of "physiological units," over that of Divine Power? "Physiological units" so endowed, are a mere name, something quite outside the mind's experience and comprehension. These theories have this fatal disadvantage, they strive to do what honestly they can not do ; by a jugglery of words to present things as intelligible which remain unintelligible. Points of transition can not be canceled in this futile, insufficient way. A phenomenal interpretation of phenomena must have an end ; it plainly has an end before we reach physiological units or gemmules. These are mere nothings to the senses, to the imagination, to the judgment. The opposed theory accepts the transition, and makes openly an intuitive, rational transfer to the invisible and supersensual. It does not gather up the whole wisdom of the world, its orderly forces, and crowd them back into hypothetical forms, increasingly unable to receive them ; it gives proportion between effects and causes, and makes the fountain as high as the stream it feeds. These wonderfully endowed gemmules, and physiological units ought, if granted, to find farther interpretation in their own organization, something to which they can in turn be referred, or we have gone thus far to little

purpose, and have found at last what we might as well have found earlier, self-sufficing things. We have hit upon a complexity of office and nature compared with which everything else is simple ; an immateriality and breadth of function which collect at a vanishing, focal point, all other powers and functions, rather than give their processes, grounds and reasons ; and this we call explanation. It is the inversion of explanation, a passage from the simple to the complex, the plain to the obscure, out of light into darkness.

Spencer's words again happily characterize his own methods, " Surely thus to assume a myriad of supernatural impulses "—and how much short of supernatural impulses, save in name, are these organizing units—" differing in their direction and amount, given to as many different atoms, is a multiplication of mysteries rather than a solution of a mystery."* Spencer, notwithstanding the great value of many of his works, and particularly of his *Biology*, is capable of lofty and precarious word-building. We instance the chapter on Variation. Under the idea of the permanence of force, applied unhesitatingly and theoretically in all directions, external causes are set to play on functions, and through functions on structure ; their results are treasured up in physiological units, at hand to receive them, capable of anything, infinitely susceptible to impressions, and indefinitely retentive of them, till the mind is prepared to accept any series of changes as a necessary consequence of shifting environments. These merely verbal facts, these balls of the intellectual gymnast, are kept in the air under the image of close-knit, mechanical actions and reactions, equilibriums perpetually overthrown and as often restored in a new form, till, by the jugglery of the artist, we are made to believe in the entire

* *Biology*, vol. I, p. 337

pliancy of organic structure, and the adequacy of physical forces to push it in any and all the ways of development it is pushing ; and this result is produced with no exact or extended consultation of the facts involved, or any sufficient exposition of the real relation between living powers and the physical conditions operative upon them, or effort to show how far the last as forces can be expressed as effects in terms of the first, and be organized into them. The imagery and the argument hinge on lower forces, and are hastily applied to higher ones, with slight confirmation or correction by experience.

When we pass up to instinct in animals, from instinct to action directed by the senses, and from this to the rational life of man, we meet at every step more manifestly with a supersensual element, one uniting itself in its affinities to a personal, supernatural power. The instinct accomplishes the ends of thought without thoughtfulness ; as if the shadow of God's provident thought rested upon the brute organism, and silently, by interior impulse, bore it to its ends. Conscious life, on the other hand, is a breaking in of a little of that light which makes way for a spiritual world, is the first condition of its being, while rational freedom holds in itself the rudiments of the new realm. It is, in its very putting forth, so far supernatural as to be amenable only to a higher law, and places the soul, whose power it is, in a position to comprehend, and sympathize with the supernatural.

It is urged against nature as a product of Divine Power, as an intermediate term between us and God, that it discloses, in its constitution, defect, suffering and violence, the violence even of cruelty. We will not stop to give these assertions the limitations and abatements that fall to them. We accept them as containing an unmistakable residuum of truth, and answer, that the physical world

is hereby put in harmony with the moral world which it supports, helps to express, quickens and holds in check. Man is the crowning feature of the world, and his ignorance, united as it is with stupidity, stubbornness and wickedness, calls for a stern school. That school our globe, in its present rugged constitution is, and was from the beginning fitted up to be. Looked at in its relation to man, we should be slow to demand, to suggest, to accept any important modification. The inorganic and organic kingdoms in their conflicts, their bitterness, in the envenomed tooth, only fitly prefigure and dramatically render the warfare between man and man, and in the soul of man. They thus disclose the strict congruity of construction, the stern law of control, with which the moral strikes its roots to the very bottom of the physical, and sends its own life through and through it. Congruity is better æsthetically and ethically, than incongruity. If the world were other than it is, if it were a piece of optimism, without defect, suffering, or violence, how much more atrocious would be the spectacle it would present under the mal-administration of man! Indeed, how would the maintenance of perfection be possible, while its chief agent was perverse and perverting; unless we were to have the constant intervention of God, restoring the mutilated, rectifying the wrong, and everywhere effacing the work of negligence and malice! The suggestions of critics may deserve attention, but we fail to understand how the world could be made and maintained materially better than it is for such a being as man, without the perpetual presence of that miraculous agency so offensive to most of those who propose improvements. Some devout, tender-hearted and trusting brother might crave the intervention of Heaven, but how shall a scientist resent the far-reaching, harmonious, vigorous yet self-consistent method now employed, and urge it as an argument against

the divine wisdom and goodness? Regarding the plan of creation as one shaped from the beginning, from the beginning including man as its consummate product, we accept its harsh features as essential parts of the whole, as the fore-falling shadow of sin whose dark history it was to disclose, as the stern school in which transgression was to be taken in hand and mastered.

Moreover, thus is the world made able to share the redemption of man, to travail together in pain with him, and with him to pass up into complete ministration and perfect beauty. To redeem nature, to mitigate its cruelty, soften its severity, develop its powers, and put it in growing harmony with his own progressively purified spirit, becomes the work of man. His home is made by him and possesses in that fact fourfold value. We feel content with what God has given, and would not venture on a larger gift till we are made ready for it. So far the indulgences of the world have been productive of more mischief than its hardships. Suffering in the animal kingdom is only one more proof of how perfectly the lower is made to share the fortunes of the higher, how broad and searching is the sympathy among things. The horse in the hands of a cruel master presents the whole moral problem; it has no more compact expression, unless it be in the careless vivisection of a scientist. What shall we say to it? On the side of man it is plain enough. He is left to his freedom, be it heartless or humane. On the side of the brute it stirs our sympathy and indignation, and God meant that it should. At this price, by this suffering, by man's suffering, by his own suffering, God purchases salvation. We allow the price to be great, very great. Is it too great for the thing purchased by it? We thank Heaven that we are saved from reply, that God himself has answered, No.

Spencer finds a strong objection to the immediate, creative oversight of God in parasites, two dozens of which or more infest man alone. Sin is a parasite ; in some of its forms strikingly so. It is an inferior life feeding on a superior one. We cannot feel the force of an argument which excludes a physical parasite, while a moral one finds admission. The general harmony of the physical and spiritual, the submission of the first to the second, should rather be with us first truths. The entire kingdom of parasites is best warred against by health, soundness of constitution, an insight that lays hold on the conditions of life and builds on them, a wise cherishing of that which is committed to us. This is especially true of man ; a mastery falls to him if he will meet its price of wisdom and integrity. It is quite in harmony with the divine plan that he should retain the government of his physical as of his spiritual life only on the condition of developed powers. So viewed, the sufferings of man occasion less difficulty than would the absence of these fatal liabilities. In the animal kingdom, we must judge these inflictions by its submission in harmony to that which is higher, by the subdued suffering which throbs along its duller chords of sensation, by the compensations of life over against life, that which is ruin to one bringing thrift to another ; compensations that pass into completeness in the vegetable kingdom. If there is to our minds still an unexplained residuum, it is a small demand that faith, fed by the general beneficence of God's plan, should wait for farther light. The ways of God will justify themselves to man ; but the time of justification must turn on the knowledge and temper of the critic. It may be as much a point of wise discipline to wait at one time as it is to see at another ; waiting always, however, on vision.

We are embarrassed by the creative work of God

because we conceive of it as a series of detached volitions, rather than as a firmly coherent plan. Allow the value of the causal relations, which evolution emphasizes ; admit their force in the divine thought, and much difficulty disappears. We cease to evoke the divine will as the sole reason, and the instant remedy, of everything. Reasons are seen to be deeper and broader than this implies, and to draw after them some unexpected results.

The world is constructively full of wisdom, of forces firmly, with marvellous endowment and yet more marvellous interplay, working out that proximate and progressive order which fits it to be the abode of man, with his aberrant and potential gifts. We may say three things concerning it. We may affirm that forces, whatever their quantity and quality, *must* work their way toward order, and ultimately reach it ; that a system of actions and reactions must be set up, that will finally secure some form of equilibrium. There is so little to sustain this view, it is so plain that the order of such a world as ours is the product of its creative constituents, and the accessions these have received, that this supposition calls for no discussion, begging as it does everything, its first ingredients, and order as essential to all ingredients.

The existence of physical forces, physical elements, in the kinds and quantities in which they make up the physical universe, may, at any period to which the theorist chooses to revert, be silently assumed, and their evolution may then be traced onward, reducing additions to a minimum, to accessions which can be overlooked or involved in their minuteness in the terms already given. The greatest obstacle to this second method, which postulates physical forces, and then unfolds them, is the organic world, which so obviously post-dates, by so long a period, the material substratum on which it rests. If the

germs of life are in turn postulated, wrapped up in their simplest forms in the material forces which precede them, and are thence, by a maximum series of minimum assumptions, enlarged to their present complex character and importance, each slight pilfer being repeated so often as to give the magnificent stealings now expressed by the entire vegetable and animal kingdoms, there yet remains the most serious consideration of all: How came there to be this growth, growth in such continuous and divergent lines of order? At this point enters the theory of Darwin. Each change is, in reference to this inquiry, essentially accidental; being involved in an assumed tendency to indefinite variation under a shifting environment. Natural selection enters in to preserve the fittest, eliminate the less fit, and so impel progress. There are three difficulties with which this theory, when made a complete cosmogony, labors. Whence come its initial factors, forces marvelously endowed and proportioned, inwrapping the ovum of a universe? Whence the increments that enter as farther terms of development, this capacity of indefinite variation, with conditions so apt for its development as to make of it the seed-field of the world, capable of giving in clear order those fittest things, worthy to be propagated? How have the indefinite delay, stumbling, halting, and failure of a purely chance process been evaded, the worthless factors, if any, been made so few, and life in each of its forms been compelled so uniformly to minister to life? Are we again to say that order, success are inevitable, disorder and failure impossible? Natural selection itself, is nothing but an expression of that happy conjunction of forces which has been secured by a truly creative act.

A series of assumptions at points so remote, in reference to quantities so minute, as to escape attention, are the basis of this theory. Its logical basis would seem to

be, We may in the beginning assume anything, we must in later periods allow the introduction of nothing. The evolution of the world implies a finite period, We may none the less accept the eternity of matter, or leave unexplained its origin, and early work before its present era was entered on. We may attribute to chance and blind forces increments we will not attribute to creative ones, rationally directed. So much to escape what, supervision, construction, means wisely proportioned to ends.

If, however, we accept a divine origin for physical forces, if we accept steadfast sustentation and supervision, if we accept definite additions, additions definite in direction and quantity ; "sports," allied to those which remain to us in plants and animals, allied to that by which the nectarine sprang from the bud of a peach, the facts which sustain the conclusions of Darwin, are included in our view, and the insuperable difficulties of his theory are escaped. The immense circle of chances through which every growing point, every function, and every form of life must play as incident to reaching a fit development, chances of whose number and complexity there are no limits, no possible estimate, is escaped. We take wisdom in place of accident as our architect. We no longer hunt for those amorphous and abortive lives with which the world, among the living and the dead, ought to be crowded, but recognize organisms as we find them, the clearly drawn and steadily maintained kingdoms and families and genera of nature. Broad divisions, open spaces, extended lines of development are everywhere present in the animal kingdom. These are explained, and we are no longer compelled to regard each living thing as a centre from which new directions may be taken in all possible ways, a point of radiation, with the infinite criss-cross of adjacent points, confounding classification. Cardinal distinctions have been established,

leading lines taken, and the product is one of order, an order so complete as to be the basis of science ; yet an order whose steps and limitations of growth are traceable. Fortuitous causes do not, and can not, explain these deeply drawn divisions. Accident should sweep over all bounds, and confound all distinctions. If each living thing and organ may be a centre of increments, and growth may be in any direction, natural selection can neither establish among the fittest, coherent, steadily maintained movement, nor winnow out with sufficient rapidity the immense amount of malformation. We shall be compelled to seek some sufficient explanation of the kinds and lines of variation.

To the third supposition, therefore, we return. The wisdom of first forces indicates their proper reference. Having accepted their divine origin, we have no objection to continuous, orderly additions, if facts indicate such a method ; while the supervision which attaches to the unfolding is in harmony with the creative impulse that gave rise to it. The rigidity of law, with the constant interlock of causes, conditions, is present for reasons already indicated, since God's work so lies level to the thoughts and labors of men. This severity is slackened, as occasion offers, since man thus finds more easily the personal thought that lies back of it. Law as law has no sanctity beyond the ends it subserves. God is not the slave of law, though the thoughts of men may be. How the two, creation and creative development, can be best combined, the personal and the physical, the universe shows, and we find no occasion to quarrel with the result ; we prefer to expend our strength in understanding it. Let each element, creation or evolution, enlarge itself freely as the facts shall become more fully known ; there is no indication that either will swallow up the other, and so blast the

double fruitage of the world. Nature is not less, but far more, the ground on which God meets us, the garden in which he walks with us, because of evolution. It is only when the beginning and ordering and ending of evolution are denied, that God ceases to call unto us, and we to look unto him. So sink we, and are lost among the physical facts that we have been so hasty to exalt. Supervision, guidance, control fail us, and we are wrecked by our own shrewd, foolish thoughts, engulfed in a shoreless ocean of natural agencies. We live without hope, and we perish without pity, save as we stand one by another, mute and despairing.



CHAPTER VI.

Man.

THERE are two elements in man's nature of most distinct character, distinct relations and genetic dependencies ; the physical and the spiritual. In the physical, we must include not merely physical functions, but those conscious and unconscious powers which are involved in their direct use as members of an animal organism. We may be content to accept for the body any origin the facts shall seem to assign it. By the most undeniable proof it stands connected with the animal life below it, in plan, in minute details of structure, in lines of development, and even by parts which subserve no apparent purpose, lingering only as traces of a lower relationship. The body is evidently wedded to the dust of the earth, and runs in history by roots of affinity far back among physical forces.

This statement does not accept as proved the doctrine of slight, fortuitous variations ; decided, creative changes meet the present conditions of the problem far better. It does not accept as sufficiently established the presence of man on the earth from a very remote period, and his slow development from an essentially animal constitution. It rather recognizes the certainly constructive, and the possibly genetic, dependence of his body on the animal kingdom ; that one factor of the goodly structure of rational life was emphatically taken from the dust of the ground. Grant this, and all the significant, pushing facts of science are provided for, and settle to their place in the creative plan, without violence, or unreasonable assumption, or essential departure from experience. Conclusions that are now merely probable, are left either to fail or to establish themselves without theological distraction. Room is again made for free inquiry, and religion equally with science prospers by the concession. We have no respect for an effort to set apart a realm in some high, inaccessible region to religion, which science cannot invade. This is to remand religion to obscure faith or downright superstition. One of the primary offices of science is to break in on the region of faith, correct, limit and enlarge its grounds. A religion that refuses to be permeated by the light of knowledge, forfeits its claims on the human soul. There will be reserved points which science can not expound, but what she can expound must be gladly yielded to her exposition.

When we come to mind, in its rational elements, there is a bold, broad transition, a chasm which no links span. The animal kingdom remains a helpless group on the farther side. No ingenuity of training or discipline makes a way for them over. There they tarry, fitted for an essentially stationary and a purely physical life. On the nearer

side are the races of men. If we take the most savage of them all, which linger close on the brink in sight of their cousins crowding the farther shore, yet, at any time, they may strike their tents, and begin the long march of civilization and enlightenment. Thence started Grecians, Romans, Anglo-Saxons, in their great achievements, certainly, not many centuries since. The second half of the scriptural assertion seems to us not less plain than the first. Having formed man physically of the dust, inwrought by his history with all lower forces, God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

The peculiar, the unparalleled spiritual powers of man are to be found in his intuitions, his rational insight. Without a sound philosophy, a philosophy of ultimate ideas,—which alone to us seems sound—we confess to an entire inability to make anything of the truths of revelation, the being of God, responsibility, immortality. The animal does not share these intuitions, and here is found a difference in kind marking a transition, a transition which no hypothetical steps of development can be made to cover without painful confusion of thought. It is enough for us to know that there is no proof of such intermediate gradations of life, that the simply physical, the merely intelligent, life ends with an abrupt line, and the rational, the spiritual, in full rudimental force, commences in men.

We deny to the animal all intuitions for various reasons, which we must satisfy ourselves with rapidly enumerating. As high, positive powers, the proof of their being should be well established, not assumed. Very many deny even in the case of man that their possession is made out; much more difficult is it certainly to win them for the animal. We are usually prepared for the conclusion by a strong feeling or a lazy assump-

tion, that what is granted to man must also be conceded to the brute. That large school of philosophers who deny intuitions, should be more than satisfied with a doctrine which withholds them from animals. If they are able to construct a plausible theory of intellectual life, in its highest forms in man, without the aid of intuition, how easy should it be to do the same thing for the lower forms of intelligence. Every other power of mind, save intuitions and the activities they involve, are conceded to the animal. They do seem to possess that intelligence, precisely that intelligence, which acute senses, quick memory and lively associations, are able to confer. That this is very considerable, the fact that so many clear-minded men take it to be all that belongs to the human race sufficiently indicates. The whole force of attack, in identifying the intellectual life of animals and of men, it would seem should be directed against the concession of intuitions to the latter.

The dominant philosophy of our time should be with us in withholding these from brutes. The more important point, their possession by man, we have discussed at large elsewhere.

When animals show a knowledge which comes to man by a combined intuition and judgment, they do so under circumstances which show that it is involved in their automatic constitution. Animals have great mastery over space relations, but this mastery starts with a large constitutional endowment, and is perfected by a muscular and nervous regimen under an essentially automatic form. It no more implies an idea of space than does our own action in winking, feeding, walking or in any effort resting on an automatic basis. From the beginning a bird adapts its flight to spaces, perfecting its direct, instinctive adjustments by muscular skill. We know that in our own action there is a constant automatic connection between sensa-

tions and the exertions that accompany them, aside from volitions. One can bow his cravat mechanically and yet find himself embarrassed in doing the same thing when looking in a glass in order to guide his action. Many efforts glide smoothly in their automatic tram-way which are only confused by direct supervision, clear guidance.

The training of animals, both by man and under their own experience, discloses their grade of powers, that the connection of mental states with physical actions is for them one of memory and automatic association. To start a connection between a sign and the action which should accompany it is the great difficulty in the education of brutes. When this is once done, repetition soon confirms it; and hence this education we fitly term training, made up as it is mainly of reiterated impressions. In like manner the sagacity of brutes is developed in nature in close connection with their own lines of experience. Connections, in some instances doubtless at their first occurrence, in others after being often repeated, impress themselves on the memory, slowly pass over to the automatic mechanism, and so become a settled portion of the sagacity of the animal. The directions of these acquisitions, their precise and inflexible character, and the fact that they are transmitted so frequently by inheritance, unite to show how closely they are connected with the physical structure.

Allied to these considerations, indicating the character of the knowledge of animals, are its stubborn limits. Association works freely within the sensational bounds set by the life of the brute. Returning connections in this circuit are caught in memory, and established in organic habits. Beyond this, acquisition is impossible, because any sporadic dependence does not address itself to the thoughts, and is at once lost to the senses; has no opportunity to settle into a fixed, constitutional connection, and is obliterated

from memory by the steady flow of experience. Thought cannot take the place of sensation, conning over its acquisitions, and making use of them in a higher, more independent and spiritual habit of mind. Hence we find that animals soon reach limits beyond which they can not be pushed.

An argument of more weight even than these, is that involved in language. Language is peculiar to man. Animals convey vocally and otherwise their present feelings and states to each other, but this fact hardly modifies the above assertion, and does not affect our argument. Language, as a transfer of ideas, not of present, concrete states ; as a use of articulate, conventional sounds for the imparting of thought, is universally wanting in animals, and this in spite of constant intercourse with man, in spite of his most patient efforts to impart language, and, in some instances at least, in spite of a physical structure capable of its easy reception. The reason of this seems to us simple and conclusive. It is the lack of intuitions, a lack of those powers whose exercise calls for language. Our abstract ideas are of two kinds, those directly given by our intuitive constitution, and those generalizations indirectly dependent thereon. The idea of space is already involved in the recognition of definite cases of extension, and may, at any fitting moment in rational growth, call for a designation. The idea expressed by the word, *sweetness*, involves comparison, and, incident thereto, the separation of one quality from groups of different qualities. But comparison proceeds under the intuitive idea of resemblance. Without this we should not have opened the comparison, nor intellectually have distinguished the single quality. Thus is it with such an idea as that of utility. A given relation of things to our enjoyments is discriminated from other relations, and the word applied wherever it exists. So objects that

are distant, events that are past, qualities or relations that are like or unlike come before the mind for its discernment, because of intuitive ideas or categories under which these distinctions fall. Hence, through his intuitions, man has constant occasion for language as an instrument of thought. Qualities, states, relations, not separable in the senses, or not even present to them, are made objects of consideration, and require a word, a word by which they can be designated, and held fast by the mind contemplating them, and transferred to other minds. Herein is a mental, constitutional demand for language. So certain is this demand to supply itself, that language springs up at once between rational beings. A nature like man's is a guarantee for the origin and growth of language, for a gathering together of those natural signs and primitive sounds by which complex present states are expressed, and a speedy development of them—through successive steps of abstraction, into language. If we accept in addition to these intellectual powers, this constitutional tendency always pushing in one direction, in addition to the physical organs which complement them and make easy their development, a belief in a direct, vocal communion of primitive man with God, or the Angel of God, the problem of language is made comparatively simple.

The roots of speech were given in speech, and by a movement spontaneous and necessary developed into language. The forces innate in the intellectual, social, physical constitution of man seem to us sufficient to secure a spontaneous development in speech. This growth will take the easiest of the ways open to it, and expand old roots, when these are at hand, instead of establishing new ones. Yet that a linguistic root, that is a sound that comes to secure a definite power of expression, is within the scope of intellectual beings, impelled to impart to

each other their impressions, can hardly be doubted. That development at once begins to exclude invention is no proof against invention, that invention which is half-instinctive.

In the animal are found none of those intellectual conditions which are the essential, genetic forces of language. He deals at once with concrete, complex, present objects, or with these held in the simplest way in memory. If it were otherwise ; if he began the process of abstraction, of separation of qualities, of relations in time, place, causation, there would be present a tendency which would constrain him hastily to lay hold of language when offered him, or slowly to shape it for himself as the necessary instrument of thought and expression. A deep constitutional instinct or longing cannot be habitually baffled. The having to do directly with objects ; the fastening of consideration exclusively on concrete states of sensation, or rather the allowing these in a direct, automatic way to work out their results, are the distinguishing features of animal life, features that are connected with the lack of intuitions, and which give no occasion for language.

When provision is made by the animal for the future as future, we refer the act, as the storing of his nuts in his nest by the squirrel, to instinct. This immediate hinging of action on sensations, appetites, organic impressions, states that stand in direct, automatic connection with the conduct that flows from them, few will deny ; and it is a fact most important in the explanations it offers of our intellectual constitution. The mental powers of the brute serve rather to thread together his passing experience, than either to displace them or modify them by those remote, ideal ends that turn on insight. He is not under, nor can he be brought under, the government of ideas. Sensations and affiliated impressions are his controlling forces.

When we add to these considerations the sudden enlargement of the brain of man, putting him quite out of the range of the most favored animal life, and so the new relation of the cerebrum to subordinate ganglia, we make out a case that must be met by the most positive proof. Higher spiritual powers can not be carelessly assumed in behalf of the animal. The intuitions remain for us the title-page of a totally new volume, one of revelation, one wherein life and immortality are brought to light, one that discloses us open-eyed and large-hearted sitting at the feet of Christ.

The sense of shame which a dog manifests, the satisfaction he takes in approval, and the quickness with which he feels censure, only disclose his close observation of the states of his master, and his active response to them. There falls upon him the shadow of a higher moral nature, and he is conscious of it in its heat and cold, no farther. He can set up no standard, and institute no action, otherwise than in sympathetic response to the will and pleasure of man, and in obedience to his own faithful attachments. This is a long way off from morality, though it may be practically better than conduct which boasts of the moral element. The happy hits of the parrot, its apt repetition of phrases, may startle us, but when we look up at the wise bird with its wicked eye it can go no farther, but revolves its familiar phrases, its wheel of foolish wit, waiting the recurrence of another lucky stroke.

The intuitions which are central in character, and so of supreme moment in religion, are right and liberty. The power above all others which constitutes personality is that of choice ; from this issues rational action, in its final self-sufficient strength. The law of this freedom, which at once calls for it and makes it possible, is right. We do not wish to enter on a complete discussion of either

of these intuitions, but only to give them the explanation, support and application requisite in making clear their relations to religion.

Liberty turns on the relation of motives, impulses to choice, action ; not on the relation of action to volition. By motives we mean the entire hold of persuasives on the mind, whether arising from external inducements or internal states. A motive involves a relation between outside and inside conditions, by which the one appeals to the other, is a power in reference to it. If liberty is the physical freedom which allows the proposed conduct to follow on the choice, then there is no question for discussion. None will deny that physical restraint is an infringement of liberty, and all should admit that the untied horse, the loosened stone on the hillside, are free in essentially the same sense as man is free ; that is, each is at liberty to obey interior tendencies without external constraint. There is no sufficient ground on which to distinguish freedom in man from freedom in the detached rock found in the fact, that the inner impulse arises in the one case from gravitation and in the other from desire. The question of freedom is settled by the manner in which the forces at work operate, not by their specific and secondary characteristics. Is the action of the desire, the motive, absolute, certain ? If so, it constitutes an impelling force, in its essential nature, one of causation, like gravitation, or the push of an engine.

Certainty and necessity are the words by which many have chosen to designate the kind of connection due respectively to moral and physical forces. If by certainty is meant *certainty*, absolute, complete certainty, a certainty capable of prediction, then there would seem to be no difference between it and necessity, assuredly not for the purposes of our discussion. Like the words, *moral neces-*

sity and *physical necessity*, certainty and necessity would merely indicate the same kind of union between different factors. Necessity is necessity whether it is looked for in the relation of action to desire, or in the dependence of a ball on the bat that drives it. Certainty that has in it an absolute, a demonstrable element, must arise from the fixed, necessary hold which the agents at work have on the action that is to follow from them. Unless there is an inexorable grasp in the motive, an efficiency which then and there sets evasion out of the question, there is no certainty, only probability. We deny certainty and necessity alike as belonging to free action. There is no important distinction between them. The use of the two words has the effect to obscure the question, to make and obliterate a difference in the same breath, to affirm a distinction and yet to give it no intelligible basis. Let the question be nakedly and fairly stated, that it may be answered on its own merits.

The connection of the motive with the will is one neither of necessity nor chance ; it is one of choice. If necessity and chance divide between them the possible connections of action, then there can be no liberty, and we accept necessity as the only wholesome branch of the alternative. We do not believe that they do. There are necessary, and there are free actions ; chance events there are none. Chance is the denial alike of freedom and necessity, and is excluded from the possible connections of a creation. It is the conception which the mind opposes to creation, and then only in a limited form. Choice is restricted to certain lines of action open to it ; the will is susceptible to the influence of motives ; the influence of motives is not of a necessary, determining character ; the final efficiency from which conduct issues is the spontaneity of the mind expressed in volition ; these we regard as the

essential facts of freedom, clear enough in themselves, and only liable to become obscure when the mind comes to the contemplation of them from a protracted study of physical forces, obedient to quite another law. The scientific connection, established by an ever-increasing variety of facts ; confirmed by signal triumphs of interpretation ; simple, direct, universal in its own field, is brought with great confidence to mental phenomena, is easily applied to them in their connection with physical forces, and is then rapidly extended through the higher and alien field of pure thought and volition. True spiritual connections are ruled out as foreign to science, because foreign to its previous inquiries. A new department is entered with no new induction, or sufficient recognition of the independent principles which belong to it.

If this is not the true view of volition, if the will is in any, the most subtle, way controlled by its conditions, then there is properly no choice, no volition, nor an occasion for any. The given action is simply a resolution of two or more conflicting impulses into a result which expresses their relation to each other ; it is the diagonal which follows from an interaction of forces which can not be each separately obeyed. The more sensitive, precise and automatic the organic mechanism of body and mind is, under these various persuasives, the better. The animal structure that most rapidly settles the controversy, that analyzes it instantly into a resultant, presents the most happy conformation. Vacillation, deliberation, an inability to determine the balance of forces, a partial obedience in succession of one and another, are all unfortunate, all betray the weakness of a machine lacking delicate, instant movement, unable quite to estimate the things submitted to it. As there is no room for choice, what is wanted is a quick, exact interplay of impulses, deciding by actual ten-

sion among themselves their respective claims. The power of the motive is to be known, like the weight of elements, by the scales. Motives may depend for their presence on investigation, an investigation, however, as automatic as an appetite, but they settle and unite themselves among themselves by actual, operative force. There is no volition, we apply the word concessively to this silent adjustment of intellectual forces among themselves. The motives yield the impulses, and the sensitive mechanism harmonizes and combines them in action. A most apt image of the organic mental structure would be that machine which in the royal mint tests the sovereigns, and rapidly sets aside the fraudulent ones as they pass its point of poise.

It would seem to follow that the unconscious is to be preferred to the conscious resolution, the instinctive, to the intelligent settlement, since, while both are equally automatic, the former is more decisive and certain. Deliberation is delay, doubt is uncertainty, consideration is hesitancy and sluggishness among efficient forces. It would also seem to fairly follow under this view, that as each motive is, in reference to the mind, a definite force, it is impossible for the mind ever to reject one of two conflicting motives, but must always combine them; the two should disclose themselves either by addition, subtraction, or composition in the resultant action, or our favorite axiom, the conservation of forces, fails us. The inferior mechanical force can never be escaped. It impresses the product according to its direction and measure, precisely as does the superior one. Men should move along diagonals only, since subject so habitually to composite forces. It is a marvellous result in moral mechanics that a moral influence rejected seems to add itself as an impulse in the opposite direction.

Losing spontaneity in this presentation of the will, we lose it also in the divine nature, and thereby miss a beginning, miss potentiality. If, in the human will, we find only a transfer of forces, it is with this idea that we must go up to the conception of the Divine Being. If God is capable of another freedom, of true origination, then no intrinsic difficulty, or absurdity in the notion itself, forbids our extension of it to man. If such an absurdity bars us in our interpretation of human choice, it remains with us when we frame our conception of the divine will. Hence it would follow that God only expresses in his action the forces within and without operative on him. There is with him no origination. God and the universe are each instant realized forces in certain stages of transition. If any thing is for a moment held in the bosom of God, it is so as a settled, determinate force, in one phase of transfer. Potentiality is taken away, as potentiality implies a power to do more or less than a given amount; but our fundamental conception now is, that every set of circumstances, though they include persons as well as things, contain fixed causes, and these only. Nor can we, denying spontaneity in the will, restore it in the intellect. The proof is weaker at this point than at the other, and the same difficulties precisely attend upon it. Having lost liberty itself, we have small motive to retain its useless foundations in the spontaneity of thought. Intellectual action, like voluntary action, so-called, will be left a necessary product of conditions now fixed, fixed also in each previous and subsequent moment. The Deity settles to the level of the universe, and the universe includes him, not he it; unless we choose to take refuge in pantheism, and identify the two, and so save the less in the larger, God in creation. The river of events is without fountains; it flows from beneath the cold, misty past as a stream that gushes from under a

glacier, itself a sinuous, creeping, tumbling torrent. Materialism, and a spiritualism that overlooks or cripples or denies its fundamental idea, that of liberty, both reach the same conclusion. Much of the extreme orthodoxy of our time is far along in intrinsic tendencies toward materialism and pantheism. Let it once be consistent with itself, and the issue is inevitable. In saying this, we of course speak only of systems, not of persons.

The recent work of Dr. Hodge, on *Systematic Theology*, takes the view of liberty which regards it not as dependent on the will, the nature of choice, but simply on the relation of conduct to the will, on freedom to follow the choice. Many of the worst deductions of this doctrine consequently attach to his presentation. Some of them we may have occasion to notice hereafter. We wish now to glance, at the difficulties he finds in choice as a spontaneous, self-sufficient act. We do this the more willingly as the author is so able, so sincere, so representative a man, and presents in their best form objections derived from scriptural interpretations which very many make in common with him. What science does on one wing, orthodoxy does on the other, and they inclose, beat up and pursue liberty between them, waging a common war.

The portion of the work containing the discussion referred to is the ninth chapter of the second part, and is found in the second volume. His first objection, unfolded at large, is completely involved in these words "To deny free agency to God would be to deny him personality. . . And yet in all the universe is there anything so certain as that God will do right? . . . Does he—the advocate of freedom—deny that the saints in glory are free, or does he deny the absolute certainty of their perseverance in holiness?" The whole force of this reasoning is found in the effort to identify the highest probable or moral evidence

with demonstration, and pronounce the one the logical equivalent of the other. It is the will of God, his voluntary character, that makes the holiness of God to be holiness, and will cause it to remain holiness so long as it expresses his choice. We are content to allow to its continuance every degree of certainty which does not destroy its nature, does not remove its seat from the will, does not settle it in fixed connections under the play of constitutional, automatic causes. We can not for the sake of certainty, demonstrative proof, accept the most skillfully constructed automaton in place of God. We do deny then "the absolute certainty" of continued holiness in God and the angelic host, in this sense, that there are sufficient constraining forces, aside from choice to secure it; we accept the certainty of it in this sense, that they have, by their own voluntary action and rational insight, beyond all fear and doubt, committed themselves to the law of righteousness. There is here the highest moral proof, but no demonstration, no necessity, resting on fixed, blind forces. To apply adjectives which belong to demonstration, to moral evidence, and to seek to obliterate or obscure their logical difference, is a method more popular than philosophical. Holiness remains forever, with all alike, a thing of choice; if it should cease to be this, it would cease to be holiness. In altering our conception of the nature of choice, we thereby necessarily modify our conception of holiness. The choice which Dr. Hodges concedes yields for us no righteousness, and he has not so much made absolute and eternal the righteousness of Heaven as destroyed it altogether. Between the highest moral evidence and demonstration the difference lies not in our degree of repose in them respectively, but in the kind of connection between the premises and the conclusion. Practically, at indefinite distances, it makes no difference whether we are

on the asymptote or on the curve, theoretically the distinction remains good forever. We have not so read through and through the will of God, or of the least of his servants, as to be able to affirm a necessary connection between any motives and the conduct that flows from them. The truly living *nexus* in holiness is the unsearchable one of choice.

It may seem irreverent to deny the absolute certainty of the holiness of God, and advantage may be taken of this against the libertarian. Yet this impression is a very fallacious one. Certainly, God would not be honored by affirming of his action a necessity which would ally it to physical causation. The certainty of action which honors God is that which arises from his conduct as in complete dependence on his choice, granting to choice its own large nature. What that nature is, is not to be decided by a show of reverence on the one side or the other. True reverence is found in a careful inquiry into the conditions of choice, both in man and in God, and in allowing to freedom its full scope in him as in us. As a retort it is sufficient to say, when accused of denying the certainty of holiness in God, that to affirm the necessity of holiness in God is to take it away altogether. The true answer we apprehend to be, that we ought first to inquire into the nature of liberty, and then to refer that liberty fearlessly to God. Investigation is not to be arrested by results embarrassing to preconceived opinions; it is for the sake of corrections that we undertake the work.

The second objection is found in the doctrines of foreknowledge, fore-ordination, divine providence and effectual calling. The theologian is as busy as the scientist in binding man hand and foot, and passing him over to some form of fate, though the stubborn demiurge is in the one case, God; and in the other, nature. We accept the difficulty, if it be a difficulty and not rather a proof. Human nature is a

fact which comes before the Bible, as does the physical universe, and with the same defining force. That nature is to be learned in its powers and laws, and the Scriptures are to be understood as addressed to a being so endowed, as finding their subject, not making him. The word is to be interpreted by the character of the creature to whom it is spoken, not this character by that word. We learn the facts of astronomy, of geology, and explain the language of the Bible in consistency with them. To pursue an opposite course leads to endless misapprehension and unbelief. The same principle with the same force is involved in connection with man. The Scriptures no more teach philosophy than they do science. They presuppose the one as they do the other. No fact either in science or philosophy can be established by Scriptural interpretation as against sufficient proof found in the department itself. This position will come up for fuller discussion in connection with inspiration, and the office of revealed truth.

That measure of fore-knowledge which is possible under freedom, we attribute to God, and no more. Not to fore-know what is impossible to be foreknown, or not to know absolutely what, from its nature, is contingent, is not disparaging to wisdom, for it is not open to wisdom. That human action admits of high estimates of probability, is sufficiently plain from our own daily anticipations.

The providence and government of God can not be embarrassed by the freedom of man. We can hardly suppose him to confer a power which he can not easily and safely handle. He presents to man the alternatives involved in choice, and shapes them to his own purposes. The real disparagement would lie in supposing God to withhold liberty, lest it should get beyond his control. Much, we believe, does find entrance into the world on account of human freedom which would otherwise be excluded. We

are glad to cut short God's fore-ordination along the lines of man's responsibility. If God's will carries over and beyond them, if he works with personal choice and efficiency through the transgressor, then he adopts and makes his own the transgression. For us at least, it becomes his sin and his only. No being can wrap his wish and effort around an action without sharing its moral character; no supreme being can do this in reference to the acts of a creature without drawing up into himself the entire guilt. Let the doctrine of effectual calling fail. We are not ready to say of this dogma, nor of any other dogma, this first, and the fundamental facts of philosophy afterward. Nor is the rejection of this belief a loss, but a relief. If God can effectually call every man by motives, and under conditions, in themselves worthy, we are utterly at a loss to understand why he does not call them all. The glory of God to be obtained by the loss of men in sin and from holiness, who could have been saved by his direct, legitimate call, is a moral enigma than which there is none greater. Every other difficulty is secondary compared with this, which strikes centrewise at the character of God, at the honor and reverence we render him. Between a moral and an intellectual or governmental limitation, we must always accept the latter as falling to God. A plan, including the elements of freedom and growth, does bring restrictions; it is the nature of all order to do so. These restrictions are a positive relief to our thought, for they shelter the moral character of God.

Again we urge, the philosophical question antedates the theological one, and must be decided independently of it. Man is, and has been from the beginning, a certain kind of being; what kind, is a question for fair inquiry, aside from Revelation. Once decided, it will affect our apprehension of the government exercised over him. By

these previous conditioning facts the methods of Heaven are to be interpreted, since they are directly fitted to them. The facts first, and the Scriptures in their relation to them is the order of inquiry. As a retort, we need only say to the present objection, the Scriptures fully and repeatedly recognize man's liberty. These passages call for another exegesis. The question of liberty is thrown back upon us by the Scriptures themselves for our settlement. If passages are to be marshaled by their first force, we have at least as large a following as our opponents. Our true answer is, we have a right to go to philosophy to settle questions antecedent to theology and conditioning it. Whether God's government shall seem to us an inflexible congeries of decrees, or law tempered by persuasion and softened by love, will depend on our estimates of man.

The third objection is drawn from the author's interpretation of consciousness. Here nothing is to be claimed or conceded. Liberty is not a fact yielded directly in consciousness, nor one, on the other hand, that can be denied on the ground of consciousness. If we were directly conscious of liberty, there would be no opportunity for discussion. No man denies thought and feeling as simple facts, or if he does, no one listens to him. Freedom is a question not of facts, but of the nature of the connection between facts, between states of mind and the acts which follow from them, between motives and choices. This, consciousness can not directly pronounce upon, since it does not reach to it, since it renders phenomena and not sub-phenomenal connections. The character of this dependence is to be decided by that rational intuition which yields relations. In view of responsibility, pressed by the moral incentives, the reason does affirm and enforce freedom as the only sufficient explanation of the facts. The generality and constancy of this conviction are, as of

every idea, its proof. We make no appeal, and we can allow no appeal, to consciousness on this question. It has nothing directly to say concerning either spontaneity or liberty. The most that can be said is, consciousness does not contradict our philosophy. The philosophy itself rests upon the aptness of the interpretation it furnishes.

The fourth objection springs from a misconstruction of the doctrine of liberty, and a deeper misconception of the seat of responsibility. "It is obvious that if the will be self-determined, independent of the previous state of the mind, it has no more character than the outward act detached from the volition—it does not reveal or express anything in the mind. . . . Man is responsible for his volitions, because they are determined by his principles and feelings ; he is responsible for his principles and feelings because of their inherent nature as good or bad ; and because they are his own, and constitute his character." The misstatement is this. The will is represented as acting, according to the view censured, independently of the motives ; it should rather be regarded as choosing or adopting the motives, and thereby taking to itself their nature, evoking the moral element incident to motives and will in conjoint action. The misconception of responsibility is this placing it in the desires, feelings, affections, aside from their adoption by the will. The rattlesnake is as moral a being as the dove, the lion as the lamb, for neither are moral. One in stern conflict with perverse appetites may be fighting his way up the precipitous paths of virtue ; another, gifted with moderate appetites and mild passions, may be gently descending the sunny slopes of dalliance. There is no moral character in the affections, aside from their dependence, direct and indirect, on the choices. The will is the centre and pivot of manhood. We need no more than to state these distinctions to

establish them. If one will not so accept them, he will scarcely allow them at all.

The fifth holds so closely by the fourth objection, as hardly to call for a distinct answer. "The doctrine that the will is determined and not self-determined is, moreover, involved in the rational character of our acts. A rational act is not merely an act performed by a rational being, but one performed for a reason, whether good or bad. An act performed without a reason, without intention or object, for which no reason can be assigned beyond the mere power of acting, is as irrational as the actions of a brute or an idiot." It is a little unkind to object to the actions of a brute or an idiot as irrational on the ground of no fixed connection in them between the incentive and the exertion. What is the distinction between these acts and those of a man but this very one, that the forces impelling effort are, in the one case, necessary, automatic, the most efficient of reasons, even causes; and, in the other, are held aloof by the mind till it can choose between them. Idiotic and brute conduct affords the best illustration of determined action, of action controlled by its so-called reasons; and if rationality turns on this feature, these deeds should be held up as peculiarly rational. There is no distinction between causes and reasons unless we make it by the introduction of liberty. A motive is a reason when the mind adopts it; it is a cause, such a force as falls to brutes and idiots, when it adopts the mind, takes hold of it with controlling power.

In the sixth objection the same phase of thought receives another presentation. "The axiom that every effect must have a cause, or the doctrine of a sufficient reason, applies to the internal as well as to the external world. . . . To refer us simply to his, man's, efficiency is to leave the demand for a sufficient reason entirely

unsatisfied ; in other words, it is to assume that there may be an effect without a cause ; which is impossible." This objection has the merit of striking to the root of the matter ; it turns impliedly on the assertion, that there are no reasons that are not causes, that the causal relation covers every relation of dependence between successive states or events. In this statement the author would find very many quite beyond his pale of belief to sympathize with him ; some indeed whom he would perchance be willing to call unbelievers ; and whose unbelief is rested on this very proposition. Every materialist will start up and say, Yes, to this central dogma on which a professedly Scriptural creed is made to rest. We also draw attention to the fact that this statement identifies, as the author in consistency ought to identify, certainty and necessity ; both are connections between causes and effects. Before making answer to this objection, we will volunteer a little support of it taken from Tylor. It is a pleasant spectacle to see two men shake hands across so deep a chasm. It would seem, however, that one or other must be mistaken in the bearings of so fundamental a principle. We anticipate censure for a want of orthodoxy. Perhaps it may provoke a little charity, if we question the right of those to throw the first stone who stand in fundamental statements side by side with the prevalent unbelief of the day. We make no point of this ; we wish to go, and we wish that others should go, where the truth seems to carry them. A good deal of bigotry may be ascribed to the fact, that men face so boldly in one direction, that they forget what is behind them ; look so sharply lest they slip on the declivity to the right, that they are ready to fall sheer over the precipice to the left.

"The tendency of modern inquiry is more and more toward the conclusion that if law is anywhere, it is every

where."* "Here as elsewhere, causeless spontaneity is seen to recede farther and farther into shelter within the dark precincts of ignorance, like chance that still holds its place among the vulgar as a real cause of events otherwise unaccountable, while to educated men it has long meant nothing but this ignorance itself."† "The popular notion of free human will involves not only freedom to act in accordance with motives, but also a power of breaking loose from continuity and acting without cause—a combination which may be roughly illustrated by the simile of a balance sometimes acting in the usual way, but also possessed of the faculty of turning itself without or against its weights."‡

These writers, far apart in general beliefs, unite in the accusation against liberty, that it denies causation, and is made thereby unscientific and absurd. Causation and chance for them cover the field, and they can not hesitate between them. To the libertarian freedom is not chance; spontaneity and causation stand in rival ownership, and to do an action freely is to perform it under a fresh power instead of a transmitted one. The question between the two parties is really this, Can there be a beginning? Can action be initiated? The one answers, Undoubtedly, and so makes way for religion. The other says with equal confidence, Certainly not, and so excludes creation and modification; sweeps away the foundations of faith in removing those of personal, moral power.

These differences are so ultimate that argument can go no farther than to bring the mind clearly face to face with them. They are to be decided by our intuitions, and we can only give our intuitive reason the best outlook, the most commanding survey of the field, and wait for its

* Primitive Culture, p. 20.

† Ibid, p. 17.

‡ Ibid, p. 2.

sentence. Accept clearly and unwaveringly the view, that no event is without a cause, a transmitted force that then and there secures it, and what follows? That a man may be censurable for doing what he could not but do; that he may be censurable for not doing what he could not do—and if to any extent, why not to all extents? If he was guilty for not doing the act of kindness which he could not do, why not guilty for not making the earth to be Heaven, though he could not do it? I could not, is no bar to judgment. If the criminal had acted otherwise, the whole order of the universe would have been subverted, his conduct would have been a fortuity, an absurdity, that of a “brute and idiot,” yet guilt in his own and every man’s opinion attaches to his action; we beg leave to ask, Why? The action of the animal in depredating, in taking the life of its fellow, on this view, is precisely that of man in doing the same things. When we rebuke a man for wrong action, we avail ourselves of an absurd impression of liberty and responsibility that lingers in his mind; and if he repeats the deed, it is because we did not attach sufficient reproof or punishment to his conduct to enable him, by the new forces thus set in play upon him, to correct his behavior. We are to look upon the criminal in all cases as a given combination of malign forces, and to strive to overmaster it by sufficient corrective forces. To bestow inadequate rebuke is as inefficacious and unwise as to pour one pail of water on a fire that requires two to extinguish it.

Add to these absurdities the further absurdity that we, the agents in the supposed correction, are no more free than the criminal, and proportion our rebukes and punishment under a necessary impulse,—and we may as well say a blind impulse, for of what use is an apprehension which is itself fixed in its quantity, and fixed in its dependencies, which is controlled by, and does not control, the condi-

tions under which it arises—and we see that no moral influences, agencies can be worked by such a theory, no moral conduct be shaped by it. We do assume, and must assume, liberty as the condition of responsibility, and liberty of so deep a nature as to give the control of action in its very seats and sources. We constantly regard censure as something deserved, whose efficiency is due to this sense of desert, and measurable by quite another criterion than that of tone or threatening emphasis. Put the question plainly, unequivocally to our intuitions, in view of our responsibilities, and the answer comes distinctly and constantly in favor of freedom. Philosophy fails to obscure the truth except for a moment, and from a single point. Under injury no man ever resists the assertions of his moral nature.

The necessity of causation is forced upon us only when, losing sight of personal features, conduct is graded down to a series of physical events, and their connection is sought after on this low plane of thought. How impossible it is to completely accept and apply the theory of necessity is seen in the following quotation from Tylor, taken from the same chapter in which he broaches his opinion on this subject. "There are various topics, especially in history, law, philosophy and theology, where even the educated people we live among can hardly be brought to see, that the cause why men do hold an opinion, or practice a custom, is by no means necessarily a reason why they ought to do so." * How is this, a sufficient cause, not a sufficient reason! "Ought" then the balance to descend otherwise than it does descend! What language have we here, is it sense or nonsense that underlies it?

It is proof against both Dr. Hodge and Mr. Tylor, that they do not state wisely, or even fairly, the doctrine they

* Primitive Culture, p. 12.

controvert. The libertarian does not hold, or need not hold, that the will is disconnected from the motive, but only that the motive—and the motive as contrasted with other motives—has no definite, physical force by which it can add and subtract itself among the conditions of action. The will is limited to the motives before it, does feel them as motives, does take one or another of them by its own, not by its potency, and thereby wins character.

We hold fast in liberty, and thus in power, and thus in duty, and thus in promise and in hope. The world has its fortunes given to it, and when they come they lie as a mere garment over it ; it knows not of them. We carry our fortunes with us ; we gather on board our resources, and launch forth in our quest. When our discoveries and triumphs are achieved, they are present with a power on our part to know, to enjoy, to enlarge them. Noble effort, enthusiasm from the beginning, have been born of the sense of power. The glory of achievement, the patience of faith, the strength of courage, the serenity of virtue, the thirst of every living soul, quenched or quenchless, are found in liberty. Here, on this pivot of power, revolves all that makes us far-reaching, immortal ; or immortality of worth to us. Liberty can grow, and covets these blank years in which to grow, integrating each on-coming period into a nobler life. Causation perishes, and may as well perish, at every transition, leaving its indifferent, electionless forces to rise in a new product, to rise and sink with each wave of evolution.

If it were true of liberty, that it must needs be a chance-force, acting from nothing toward nothing, playing no part in God's universe but one of confusion, misunderstanding and ignorance, the objections made against it might well hold. Liberty must be seen to spring from the spontaneous intellectual powers of man, and be coupled with its supplementary perception, that of right, before the

two can be yoked to the chariot of the morning, and bring forward a new spiritual creation. That insight of the soul, that straight-forward, far-reaching vision by which lines of duty, obligation, opportunity, of sympathetic, creative mastery over events, are seen to radiate deep into life, to lie vanishing, on the vanishing outlines of the future; that single, searching eye of the soul, must be seen to be in man, before we have a service for freedom, and can understand the awakening power with which it responds to an opportunity, and goes forth to fulfill a destiny, that human destiny which is found in casting off successively the unfolding conditions of growth. The penetration, the comprehension, the vision of the soul centre in the moral reason, in the conscience, in that final intuition that leaves the unmistakable seal of obligation on the least and the lowest of its renderings of life. In no other activity do all powers so concur, so converge. Experience, reflection, observation, pains-taking deduction, wise theory and patient practice, all yield the light by which this organ of comprehension sees; yet it is that sees, not these; it that turns counsel into command. The whole life of man, physical, social, intellectual, with every shade of coloring upon it, in its deformities and beauties, its actualities and possibilities, is that which is seen, and that on which the lines of growth are slowly drawn. Entirety, more and more completeness, permeating, shaping, guiding power come of this vision of the mind, a vision passing into duty. It discovers "the fitness of things," "the truth of things," "the greatest good of the greatest number," that which "is worthy of the human soul," "blessedness"; it brings to light the long-hidden plan of God, disclosing the wonderful variety and richness and wisdom of his giving, a giving locked up in the germinant powers of a holy life, and then includes them all in the law of the soul, its

rectitude, its right. Our highest emotional nature lends itself to this insight. Only as we feel do we know deeply, know a spiritual truth, a spiritual relation and promise. The lights and shades of the understanding are by the enlivened affections warmed into glowing colors, changeable, ethereal, as real as those that play on morning clouds and hill-tops. Know God's spiritual universe without the pure, deep colors of a spiritual atmosphere shed upon it, shifting with it as the beams of his wisdom and grace go on their way! Know, then, this material world in the workshop and the crucible alone, and see not its fellowship with the light as in mountain solitudes, morning and evening, it holds communion with heaven.

The first simple imperatives of conscience may not seem to have much significance, to hold much in reserve, but one command is interlocked with the next and leads to it, one measure of insight is the condition of a succeeding one. Wherever we are found, this teacher takes us up with a duty. The farther we pursue the duty, the more it becomes a pleasure, diverges into other pleasures, and puts our feet at the beginning of new and broader paths. We of to-day, having learned much of the laws of life, reverence them more deeply, are more ready to accept the familiar paths of obedience, to adopt them as they lie outlined before us as also the ways of sagacious and far-reaching utility, and to pursue them henceforth, denying their ultimate obligation, but accepting their wisdom. Virtue is easily travestied in her instruction by mere sagacity, when a crowning eminence has been reached, and the rugged path behind lies justified to the very senses. But it is the obedient soul, the soul that strengthens itself to obey, that first reaches a moral height, and drinks together the fresh inspiration of labor, of duty, and of love; that is at once mastered by and masters its

impulse, being fully able to surrender all and receive all, to win or wait the winning, as shall fall to it. There is no victory of moral power, no subjection of warring impulses, no last cast of the soul upon truth, in mere utility, in a comprehensive search after good, a good that must presently gather up all pleasures, making payment as speedily as may be to the thrifty spiritual husbandry that has been expended for them. The order of spiritual growth has not been this, can not be this ; not often a slow, wise way of cunning accretions, but often one of convulsive upheaval, of surrendering all and facing all in a forlorn hope. Virtue dismisses a thousand things close at hand, and seizes with all her strength, upon one remote and uncertain. Having sold all for the hidden treasure, the love of God, we find our wealth at length summed up in these heavenly terms : All these things shall be added unto you ; and the law of our effort in these words ; Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it ; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

The moral law presents very different views as we rise above it or sink beneath it, as we gain power to mount by it, or fall into the shadow of its great threatenings. But this law is never something removed from God, something from which we flee to God. It is God's outlook toward us, the highway which he has thrown up along which to lead us. All our consolations, encouragements, forgiveness, our sense of divine help and favor, come to us as we struggle after obedience. There is no impersonality nor alienation in the law of God, the moral law. It is the counsel of our Father, the index finger by which he guides us, and makes us to discover the paths of blessing from which we are now so far off, by which we are so little capable of profiting. The law alone is barren. God is in the law with his wisdom and love and personal presence to sus-

tain it and animate us, and to crown obedience as a work and a joy, a fellowship with himself.

The seat of this law is the individual conscience ; this is the Shekinah at which God holds intercourse with each of his creatures ; this the tabernacle at which we draw near and worship. No commands that are not addressed directly or indirectly to the conscience can constitute a moral government, nor any government except one of interest or force. It is a perception of the fitness of the action, its intrinsic moral claim upon us, or of the right of the person who lays it upon us to require it of us, that makes us parties to it, and inspires within us the feeling of accountability. Mere good to be gained or evil to be avoided, violence to be escaped or favor to be won, are prudential considerations, which may develop sagacity, call forth fox-like cunning or human wisdom, but have no hold upon our ethical nature. We may chafe under these lower motives, we may resent them as imposing the bondage of slaves, but we can not translate them into moral obligation, light them up with the dignity and scope of duty, unless we can, in some way, get back of them, and look upon patient, noble action under them as itself excellent, vindicating a claim for us to the independent and higher worth of well-doing. A command as a command subserves no spiritual purpose, except as it unseals the moral nature, and draws it out in an obedience, increasingly free, intelligent, delightful and comprehensive. The precepts of religion are what they are to us because they are transcriptions of the law written in the heart, and thus slowly restore this to legibility, and ready control. The rational, moral being finds himself through the command in possession of the counsel of Heaven, and so he, by obedience, is made a new or renewed creature. If there were not this deep answer of our nature to the will of God, if we could not see

his ways to be wise and good, if they were not already implanted in our constitution, we could not be lifted toward him. We should be left to wait for what development might fall to us on the low line of our inherent powers. Any regeneration, re-creation would be a new creation, snapping the links of connection, and destroying identity, at least in the personal, moral element. What new creatures God may make, we know not, but it is plain enough to observation that he makes no new men, that the seats and secrets of our lives are already with us.

This necessity of moral perception as the basis of a moral precept, carries with it the impossibility of either reward or punishment, in any truly ethical sense, which does not spring from the soul's acceptance or rejection of its own recognized law, from thoughts that accuse or excuse the conduct before them. There may be a coarse feeding on physical comforts, but no sense of virtue, no desert, no growing power to understand and to receive good, no joy in divine favor, divine forgiveness or divine acceptance, nor renewed strength, without an ethical nature to cast us down under sin, and lift us up under obedience ; without a perception of the mercy that overlooks transgression, and the grace that quickens our powers to fulfill the law of our life. Those doctrines which regard the human heart as absolutely dead in sin take from it the power to be healed, since healing must turn on life, a life that at least is able to go so far as to bring penitence, and open the heart to forgiveness.

So, too, punishment that is anything more than physical violence, can not take effect without a sense of guilt to sustain it, a secret acceptance of it by the criminal as deserved. Mere suffering is not edifying, quite the reverse. The eye that looks on must be able to trace in it the issue of moral forces, a declaration of principles, the outcome of living,

creative, wisely ordained powers, or he is either disturbed and distressed by it, or made devilish by it. The difference between a martyr and an outcast lies at this point, a difference which they both, and even the mob which hoots them, understand ; a difference put plainly forth by the dying thief. We receive the due reward of our deeds ; but this man has done nothing amiss. There is no more startling moral fact than that which martyrdom has so often presented, the impossibility of driving any man from the defences of his innocence ;—the impotence of public sentiment, private hate, and popular rage, when they attempt to crowd the weakest from their integrity. It is in this battle that one man puts ten thousand to flight. Tyranny is no other than this, a separation of punishment from guilt, and an authority rightfully constituted, and the tyrant thereby becomes the criminal, for whose overthrow all things grow expectant. Reward and punishment are deeply seated in the soul, so deeply that they often reverse the effects of physical pleasure and suffering, and are the only medium by which these can ever pass over into bliss or misery, elevation or degradation.

Scripture precepts abundantly recognize this coincident interpretation, this broadening out of law by our moral nature. They either make no effort to cover the field of conduct, or do it so concisely as to leave all the details of action to be made out by the moral nature in the light of a few principles, or of a single fundamental one. The ten commandments are barren and inadequate till filled up by the generous, lively affections of a moral nature. The one great injunction of love toward God, with its corollary of love toward man, is simply an indication of what should be the primary state of the soul, and leaves unindicated that complete structure of the life by which, on the one hand, it is to be won, and, on the other, expressed. The moral

nature is not dispensed with, but put at work by this precept. The commands of God's word might, nine-tenths of them, be lost, and yet be capable of speedy restoration by the spirit of those that should remain, and the fundamental temper of the Gospel acting in a living way on our moral temper. So nine-tenths of the precepts of a larger life may remain to be added by the moral nature, as the grounds of the separate injunctions are seen by it. A Scripture precept is a taper conveniently located on our way, but is no substitute for the torch we bear with us, and whose flame is fed by a Christian conscience. Commands that lay hold of action in its details may be indefinitely multiplied, and yet leave those subject to them inadequately guided, unless the moral nature can stand each instant as the principal. Witness, the manifold enactments of civil and criminal law, and the barren obedience of one who aims merely to keep within them. A hundred precepts have not the scope of a single principle, and would be worth far less than they now are, did they not in so many instances, suggest the principle, and so quicken the moral nature. Scriptural commands are usually the special applications of general principles, and thus they both hold the central truth and scatter its light by the clear reflection of a particular case under it. Positive institutes, formal commands, more and more disappear from the word of God as it advances in its work, and we are increasingly left to handle, shape, complete our own lives.

The ritualistic law was thus made a semi-mechanical initiation of obedience, by which its pupils were slowly led to, and at length left at, the feet of Christ for pure spiritual instruction. The finality of the Gospel is that of the apostle, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just,

whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things." There is no right action taken, no just sentiment, no enlarged opinion, which does not, by its own force and worth, belong to us as Christians. The Christian spirit sows and reaps in all fields ; is always scattering, applying truth, hence always gathering, discovering the new applications of truth, including the old in the new, and the new in the old, with the endless ingenuity of wise and faithful husbandry. Nothing is barren with it, and if any truth becomes so, it is because the soul has fallen off from its free handling and use, has installed it as an inflexible precept, instead of accepting its guidance as a flexible principle.

The Scriptures also directly indicate the interior nature of the religious life, that all things feed it and none control it, that its seed is within itself after its kind. Christ, when pressed by the Pharisees as to the coming of the kingdom of God, they being thoroughly possessed by an idea of its external, formal features, made answer : " The kingdom of God cometh not with observation ; neither shall they say, Lo here ! or, Lo there ! for behold the kingdom of God is within you." This declaration covers the interior growth of the soul into the kingdom of God as the condition and controlling feature of its coming. In the same spirit the apostle says, " For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." The opening chapters of the Gospel of John are full of this view of the divine truth, working freely, redemptively in the heart of man. Christ is the word, the light,—that strong image of quickening force—and to those who receive him he gives power to become the sons of God. He that believeth on the son hath everlasting life ; and

he that believeth not the son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. Belief and life are made coextensive, spiritual activity with spiritual well-being.

The opposite truth receives like explicit statement. The first prohibition ran in these words: "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die." The only interpretation which the facts following seem to allow to this command, is that which recognizes the instant fruits of sin as accompanying transgression, and enlarging themselves with it. Death at once sets in as the entail of sin, that spiritual death of which the decay of physical life is the accompaniment, image, harmonious constituent. Moses, impressed by this inevitable sequence of guilt and punishment, said to the Israelites: "If ye will not do so, behold ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out." God's providence is here glanced at as running along with sin, and working retribution through it. Judas is spoken of as going to his own place. The wages of sin are earned by it, lie as payment at the end. When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.

The Word of God is not indeed primarily constructed on this view of an internal, necessary government by and through our moral nature. This is rather the deeper, more ultimate truth which we reach as we are able to understand and receive it; the light that finds reflection on the storm-clouds and gives them their lurid hue. It is not the absolute, final statement that is dwelt on in the Scriptures,—this is too remote, too incomprehensible, and so too feeble—but that presentation of it, that expression and bearing of it, which are level to the understanding of the hearer. We are kept in the outer circle of positive authority, till we are ready for the inner circle of pure mor-

ality, which is the true pivot of authority. The Israelites are persuaded to obedience by temporal rewards and punishments. The future in Christ was not, in its cardinal motives, forecast for their instruction. It was impossible that it should be. These motives were spiritually more remote from them than were the events on which they turned in time, and were necessarily reserved till the facts in human history could yield, illustrate, enforce them. While the gospels clearly present the divine government under its primary aspect of reward and punishment, these motives lose their temporal aspect, disclose in the background the natural sequence of sin and suffering, holiness and pleasure, and are accompanied by the clearest statements of guilt as a fact exclusively of our moral constitution.

The worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched, are the physical images of a retribution whose interior, immaterial, indestructible elements are plainly indicated. The physical image has no consistency without the spiritual fact it outlines. The grounds of the punishment are most explicitly, purely moral. This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light. The world is reprov'd of sin because they believe not in Christ! The new light gave new conditions and new discoveries; so the sin of the world came forth startlingly on this back-ground of divine love, this re-rendering of the moral problem.

Punishment as punishment subserves a purpose of instruction, awakens and directs the moral nature, but only as it keeps close to, and calls forth, a sense of guilt. On this condition it works with conscience; on any other it is merely a physical instrument, a bar of violence set up against brute force; and so hides rather than discloses moral distinctions. If God's government were to intensify

reward and deepen punishment without calling forth to the full therewith moral insight, it would conceal and weaken the interior, religious life, overlaying it with alien motives. Thus physical and social blessings, unsustained by the moral nature, unilluminated by gratitude, and unappropriated by spiritual aspirations, are the sure inlets of sin, first of lethargy, then of perverted desire. The rewards of Heaven, to be those of Heaven, must keep pace with and quicken spiritual development; they must be wings, unfolded wings, with which we fly upward. Nor is it less plain that punishments that are imposed primarily from without, that are the inflictions of another's will, that are alien to the apprehension of the criminal, can never stand in concord with his moral constitution, nor educate the soul into a knowledge of fundamental principles, nor evoke from the guilty spirit its own sentence. Those evils which unfold themselves as the normal fruits of sin; those evils which fill the transgressor with his own ways, the folly of his own actions, and those positive penalties which anticipate and interpret these, are alone disciplinary.

God's government in the physical world, and so far as we can observe it in the moral world, is one of interior forces, of self-executing laws. We believe this to be the type of his entire government, and that the moral elements at work in the soul of man will more and more show themselves able, without external violence, or corporeal inflictions, to lay hold of, constrain, punish and reward, in short to rule, those who have been placed under them; to set at work in a natural sequence external causes and conditions which shall concur with and complete the moral forces which accompany and control them—control them both by an imposed harmony and a direct efficiency.

The physical world is, as we now observe it, in keeping with, and dependence upon, the spiritual world; suf-

fering and punishment are, in a general way, the direct product, under existing conditions, of transgression ; a like dependence and relation hereafter would leave each to reap as he had sown, he that had sown to the flesh of the flesh to reap corruption, and he that had sown to the spirit of the spirit to reap life everlasting. Man is, by his own nature, by the construction of society, by his relation to the world about him, under government, a government that turns increasingly on his moral constitution, that is deepening, widening, gathering stringency with each year ; that already inflicts terrible penalties and bestows great rewards, that tightens its grasp according to the transgression, and gives liberty and promise only as the soul can use them ; a government that springs out of growth and ministers to growth ; a government that rests not on exterior force but interior life. This government is God's ownership in man his creature, an edict that runs constitutionally, creatively through him, the law not one jot or tittle of which can fail till it is fulfilled. Aside from Revelation man arises in the possession of powers that bring totally new responsibilities, and open up a development in a spiritual direction whose possibilities cover the remote future of this, and, as we believe, of another, stage of being. He is the first term of a new kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, under its two phases, earthly and heavenly. Nor let us be perplexed because God no more hastens results in the spiritual than in the physical world.

We might have opened the discussion of our moral nature with an exact statement of what we understand by it ; but a partial oversight of its offices helps to prepare us for a comprehension of its peculiar features. We would put conscience, the moral intuition, at the centre of our moral nature. We become moral beings because of the power by which we perceive right and wrong in action.

Being so endowed we are made moral, not in one power or affection, but in all, since this one cognition gives to conduct a controlling plan. All actions are necessarily gathered under the one supreme law, and tacitly receive their position and relations in character from it. Hence our moral nature is pervasive of our entire nature, and bears with it everywhere a holier and more spiritual plan, by which it compiles in conduct the elements at its disposal.

Conscience discerns right in free, rational action, not independently, as the eye perceives color, but in action understood in its motives and effects, apprehended in its relations backward to the person whose it is, and forward to those affected by it. Diligent inquiry, apt reasoning, a skillful tracing of results, lively sympathies, are a part of the antecedent conditions of correct moral judgments. Our entire intellectual and emotional nature finds play in making ready that comprehensive presentation of conduct which prepares the way for the moral intuition. This intuition, when it comes, makes obligatory the action which it accepts as right. There is thus, in our moral constitution, the utmost opportunity for growth, for a thoughtful and broad inquiry into action, since it is only upon action as thoroughly understood that conscience is prepared to pronounce. Ignorance, according to its degree, vitiates the intuition. The moral nature is superinduced upon our intellectual nature, and establishes by means of it, and over it, a law. The action that was seen to be wise becomes obligatory, the conscience assuming an authority in regard to it from which there is no escape. Thus our nature is rendered autocratic. This obligation is made up of two elements, primitive and inseparable, the double bearings of one thing, the intellectual and emotional sides of our intuition, its vision forward and reaction

backward. The word, *right*, designates the intellectual characteristic of the action, which is the basis of the emotion expressed by the word, *obligation*. A feeling must have an occasion, must attach itself to some experience, perception, intuition. Obligation without any perception which can be its ground or occasion, is, if not meaningless, practically void. Obligation is significant only as it bears on a line of conduct, and the right in conduct is that which gives it attachment. So beauty is at once an intuition and an emotion ; or an emotional quality which the mind, in moments of exaltation, has the power to see and feel in fitting combinations. The intuitive qualities, the beauty and the right, are especially evanescent as they are primitive, simple, inexplicable, and easily absorbed, on the one hand, in the intellectual apprehensions which give rise to them, or, on the other, in the emotions which spring from them. They are the subtle links between spiritual affections and pure states of the understanding. Language, a testimony of the common conviction, has marked their presence in this region, and there they are to be sought by an insight that has the range of it.

Obligation, the existence of which all admit, may be referred, as we have now referred it, to a simple, primary power, or it may be ascribed to that conventional force which a community brings to bear on customary action, the general sanction which they cast about lines of conduct useful or agreeable to them. This view may also be strengthened by the accumulated, hereditary force which attaches to transmitted tendencies ; by the slow, organic growth of a law incipiently weak. We believe these explanations and kindred ones unsatisfactory for many and strong reasons. We shall not dwell on them, but concisely state them.

That view of our moral nature which grounds it in a

perception of the useful, and looks to public opinion and hereditary transfer for its sanctions, does not meet the full force of the facts of our moral constitution, either as expressed in words or actions. The language of moral conviction is deeper and stronger than this theory suffices to explain. Its phenomena are broader than it. Guilt is more than error, even than shameful and ridiculous error ; remorse than chagrin ; virtue than success and complacency. All clear, strong moral facts harrow and stir the mind to a depth quite peculiar. We know what conviction and what rebuke public sentiment can work. Fashion, custom find in it their sanctions. To violate fashion is to some minds very painful, but even these do not mistake the violation for wickedness. Fashion does not, in many cases, differ from morals in the force with which it coerces,—not a few in the observance of it will set aside duty—but in the kind of sentiment it calls forth. This is intrinsically different from that which attaches to moral obligation.

In striving to settle the class to which certain facts belong, we should consider them, not in their obscurest, but in their clearest, form ; we should classify them from the centre rather than from the circumference, by their bold features rather than by their vanishing outlines. But he who has won the grace of virtue, or is struggling with a sense of guilt, arraigns himself before the tribunal of his own thoughts ; it is peculiarly untrue of him that he commits himself to conventional sentiment. Hence it is a most familiar fact in the world's moral history that the individual conscience opposes itself directly to the community, and stands by its own strength against the most concentrate pressure of general and hereditary opinion.

Though the word, *right*, bears a lower meaning, and sometimes simply indicates an action fitted to an end, it

still yields, in other instances, with no blurred outline, the higher moral signification. Though it may have traveled up by this pathway of common utilities to its holier import, there it stands none the less, a cleansed pilgrim at the shrine of Deity. When we say of a courageous act of self-sacrifice, that it was right, our verdict is inspired by a moral enthusiasm that springs from no calculation of beneficial results, nor is dependent on the subjection of the act to the conventionalities of the community. It is the recognition of the light in which a good action is clothed by its own moral quality. The minds least subject to the merely useful and conventional are preëminently the moral minds, yielding bold, strong moral judgments ; while those sensitive to public opinion find their moral sentiments warped and weakened thereby. The facts, then, of our moral nature are neither the same as, nor do they run parallel with, those of custom, usage, usefulness, as now recognized ; but are constantly crossing them, transcending them, confronting them. Both language and daily action indicate this want of conformity. There is virtually bound up in this objection many items, as the incongruity can be traced in many directions, in all directions in which the moral phenomena are relatively pure.

The theories of morals are falling, and must ultimately fall more obviously, into two classes, the one with the underlying basis of utility, the other of duty ; the one making moral action the product of our circumstances, and the other an ultimate law and insight in our constitution. Of these theories we accept the second because the moral progress of the world has largely, almost exclusively, been achieved under it. The hero and the martyr, in their response to moral truths, have stood by them as principles, not as advantages ; as resting on their own inherent rightfulness, not on the opinions of men ; as possessed of an un-

derived glory, not one caught from prevalence. We believe this to be so well-known and universal a fact as to call for no proof. This spirit was the Christ-like spirit, the divine incarnation of the moral temper ; a temper accepted by the individual as with him obligatory, self-sufficing, final, and by him to be carried to the many ; not as one already recognized by them, or caught from them, as gainful and creditable. Indeed, martyrdom can hardly arise on any other terms, or be justified on any other grounds. Death, in the declaration of a principle, subverts no uses but moral uses, and can receive no gains but moral gains. On a basis of physical, temporal advantages it is absurd to give all and thereby lose all, to strike from under one's feet the very position from which he traffics with the world for its goods. When Mill exclaims, in the noble elevation of a moral impulse, " I will call no being good, who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures ; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go," * we do not object to his attitude, but it is one singularly transcendental to utilitarian morals. No basis can be found for it in mere uses, for hell is the negation of all pleasures, and hence all uses. It is a self-affirming and self-rewarding morality alone that can stand up successfully against a supreme tyranny. Hell, it seems then, though it represents the absolute loss of all good, save this sense of righteousness we plead for in the mind itself, is light when weighed in its inflictions against the integrity of the soul. And so, truly, has all suffering been held in the presence of virtue by the good and the brave ; this is the verdict precisely which has made them brave and good. On this idea and this only the world has progressed, and must still progress, in a heroic way. All other gains are commercial merely.

* Examination of Sir Wm. Hamilton's Philosophy, vol. I. p. 131.

This again is rather a bundle of reasons than a single reason, as heroic action strikes to different depths into our moral nature and at many points, and at them all discloses something of its true tone.

A third reason for the intuitive view of our moral nature is, that it alone affords any true, legal discipline, and thus gives a foundation of government. In this point is involved the relation of right to liberty. We can have no ground for choice, and hence no proper choice, between things alike, things that, in their value to us, can be reduced to one standard. Between objects that are simply useful, the most useful must be taken. The ability to take the least useful arbitrarily, with no reason, would be a liberty subversive of order, one to be deprecated rather than coveted. It would merely show that the mind played at random, and that the influences which should control it had lost hold upon it. An inferior good can not be chosen in place of a superior one, both being defined on a common scale of pleasure, without subverting reason. If, therefore, all good can be resolved into utility, can be measured in uses by the degrees of pleasure it confers, liberty to choose between these degrees can form no part of a rational equipment, but must rather interfere with it, cutting off the mind from the very considerations which should control it. This freedom would be a playing loose instead of fast in the mechanism of existence.

Two kinds of rational government, of orderly, causal activity are open to beings so constructed as to come under the control of pleasures that admit of registration, comparison, degrees as greater or less. These pleasures may be found,—as in purely animal organizations—so lodged in self-acting appetites, as to settle their claims, one with another, by immediate, physical preponderance, and to combine themselves in a direct way, like mechanical

forces. If intellectual powers intervene between appetites, passions, desires and their gratification, enlarging their scope and classifying them, this intellectual action becomes simply a more exact comparison of pleasures, a more careful estimate of their separate and relative values ; and may be left, under experience, to an increasingly automatic discharge of its functions ; the forces so tallied and defined being remanded, as before, to their own direct efficiency. The intellect is merely additional mechanism, putting the appetitive and emotional nature into more extended, varied and safer play with its surroundings, reducing diverse forms of good, present and remote pleasures, to one standard, and passing them into the constitution as efficient forces under exact resolution. The more complete, precise and unobstructed this intervening action is, the better, and the mind, if its results are to be rapidly and safely made up, must be left to the direct and exclusive control of the comparisons whence these solutions issue. Here is neither the opportunity nor the demand for any liberty. The highest good, when seen indexed on the intellectual dial-plate, must be left as a motive to do its own immediate work in the emotions and actions. The representation is still more exact, if we look on the intellect as simply disclosing motives before concealed, and thus uniting them with others in direct play on an organism of appetites, impulses, whose nature it is to compound and redirect them in action. The practical resolution that is reached, the only one that should be reached, is the government of the strongest motive, the free expenditure of the predominating influence, with such an inclusion of other motives as the case admits.

Now the right, as an intuitive idea, enters the field of desire both to demand choice and to give it conditions. It demands choice, because it often directly opposes itself

to pleasures, and always refuses to rank with them. It gives to choice its needful conditions, because, refusing in ultimate analysis to be recognized as a utility, a good, a pleasure of any sort, it can not be brought to a scale of degrees with them, and thus lose its power to present an alternative. Right remains something forever diverse from mere good, and something, therefore, which can be rationally chosen as opposed to mere good in all its degrees. One can wisely say in reference to it, to hell I will go rather than surrender it. It is this irresolvability of the right into a form of pleasure that enables it to furnish the conditions of a rational choice; nay, to demand such a choice. Abundant advantages, indeed, flow from its acceptance, but conscience does not recognize these advantages as the grounds of its authority. It makes gain incident to obedience, not obedience to gain. Authority is, with it, primitive and absolute.

Herein we find the basis of all proper government, the very root and ground of the idea among men. Government that does not rest on the moral sense is either violence or skill, is bringing to bear overwhelming force, or a subtile modification of existing motives, so as to win one's ends. In this sense we govern the brute, when by pains or pleasures we bend him to our purpose. The pain or the pleasure is looked on merely as an incentive, a force, a fresh condition in the problem; as much so as steam added to or withdrawn from the cylinder. It is only by an accommodation of words that the engineer can be said to govern the engine, or the driver his team. In each instance the process is quite another thing from the government of men. Men alone are governed, and they only as the control is based on right, as it avails itself of the authority which rules, or is present to rule, in every man's bosom. Governments become tyrannies just so far as

they depart from these moral conditions of the problem they are dealing with. A mild government may be as certainly tyrannical as a harsh one.

The very presence, then, of government everywhere, in a broader, better sense than a control of physical forces, or a cunning re-adjustment of motives, discloses the underlying rock of a moral nature on which it rests. If we deny the ultimate, primitive character of this sentiment, our respect for any form of rule becomes purely conventional ; a feeling without foundation beyond its hereditary force ; or one to be attributed wholly to interested motives, the immediate operative power of a good or evil just ahead. Thus government sinks from its highest to its lowest factor, catches its spirit from its meanest not its best subjects, its unrighteous not its righteous rulers. It becomes a threat and a promise, a new application of motives, an artificial contrivance for the guiding or engineering of society toward a personal end. The whole moral history of the world is swept away. Obedience ceases to be a virtue, disobedience a crime. The disciplinary power of the restraints of the household, of society, of the state, of man over man in those hundred relations in which governments so easily and so justly spring up among us, is gone. There is no foundation for any of them beyond their usefulness, the gains that attend upon them. They are exactions profitable to power, or commercial exchanges fair to both parties.

The readiness with which government is established, the strength with which it holds its ground, its wholesome social, moral discipline, the ethical problems it is constantly proposing, the blindness of those under it oftentimes to its exact gains, yet their noble enthusiasm in its behalf, all serve to contradict the view that can find no deeper basis for it than self-interest. Moreover, a utili-

tarian theory of morals leaves the utilities reached by government in conflict. The utilities of the ruler and the utilities of the subject tend to be different, at least in the apprehension of the parties, and if there is no ground of right between these parties to government, what but force can settle a conflict of advantages? And may not force constantly re-adjust these balances? It may be answered, the utilities of many, of all, and not of one or a few, are to be considered; and, farther, the utilities of each viewed from any high point require a respect for the utilities of all. This high point, however, is not generally accessible, neither is the assertion true on any other than a moral foundation, on any other condition than a free play of moral sentiments. The highest physical, intellectual and æsthetical culture of the few is all the more quickly reached by the relative degradation of the many, by an eager grasping of common resources; and on grounds purely of interest the few can be and are opposed to the many. The moral sentiments that prevent this would either not arise at all; or, arising, have no sufficient power to alter the condition of society, without a moral law to sustain them.

As to the first assertion, that government must regard the utilities of the many, there is nothing save conscience either to utter or emphasize this *must*. A physical power that can claim and win its own pleasures, or even the pleasures of a majority, may in the act hold the pleasures of others or of a minority at its mercy. If it be said, that practically this is exactly what has taken place, that the world has been ruled by vacillating physical forces till it has been taught prudence, taught to lay force aside in a serviceable compromise of interests, we must deny the statement in its broad form, and insist, that there has all along been present, in an obscure way, a sense of rights which has

greatly helped to temper and guide the conflict. The moral sentiment has by no means ruled in these conflicts, but no more has it let them alone. It has so underlain them as to give them a history, a social, progressive character. Nor are we dealing with the ninety-nine cases in which rights have wholly or in part miscarried, but with the one-hundredth case, worth them all in historic significance, in which they have been sustained. One phenomenon may be sufficient to decide the reality of a new element. We must leave the point in its manifold argumentative bearing to every one's perception. For us the moral element is deeply embedded in rights, and righteous rule among men. Only thus can these become the strong, organic frame-work of order. The insufficiency of mere utility, with no underlying moral impulse, to do the work assigned it, is clearly seen when we are reminded that utility is a mere abstraction, and rests back, in each instance, on some concrete fact of pleasure for its support. The pleasurable act is the useful one. If, then, obligation attaches to utility, it does so by first attaching to pleasure. But no assertion could be more contrary to our experience than this, that our pleasures are obligatory. No sense of obligation could be more superfluous than this; none more directly in conflict with the true office of conscience, constantly ruling our pleasures into the background; and there could be none which would be likely to more embarrass utilitarians themselves in securing a proper enforcement of the pleasures of others, as opposed to our own pleasures. Our own pleasures, as more immediate and vivid, would at once have the mastery.

The government of God, much more imperatively than human government, calls for the moral sentiment as its starting and returning point. Utility, safety, pleasure to be immediately realized, may give some force to human

ordinances, but the only suitable relation of the soul to its Maker is that of affectionate trust and cheerful obedience. The rightfulness or righteousness in God's government is far more fundamental than in partial, transient, human control, as his government aims so little at particular actions, certain things to be done or not to be done, and is so wholly spiritual, striving to call forth, shape, direct the affections. This its moral character must be sustained and fed by a pure moral impulse ; spiritual in its aims, it must fully justify itself to the spiritual nature. Falling back on interested action, it is unable to contend successfully with those sins which are also intrenched in selfish feelings. It can not meet and drive back the devil with his own weapons. It has no high and holy ground from which to wage its battle. It has forgotten its motto, to overcome evil with good. Sin at worst becomes a mistake of selection on the bill of pleasures, and, as the subjective state of the agent always determines for him what is pleasure, the better dishes urged upon him do not disclose to him their superiority.

Nor can the government of God, unsustained by an ultimate moral verdict, urge to advantage sanctions either of reward or of punishment. For the Supreme Ruler to do this, to add pains aside from the natural tendencies of sin, or rewards detached from the rewards of holiness, is to throw the problem of conduct more and more off its natural basis, and re-adjust it for partial, private ends ; is to do the same thing that every earthly tyrant does.

These farther penalties are admittedly not involved in the nature of the wrong act, nor subordinated thereto ; are no part of the fruits of sin, but are inflicted on the basis of will. But if this will has no intrinsic righteousness back of it, is not engaged in a pure moral service, by what right does it administer punishment ? And how can

the heed given to its penalties fail to obscure the intrinsic or moral connection which have been overlooked by them? Its inflictions are punishments only in name, and in fact are pains used to warp the will of the subject to the will of the ruler, are tyranny.

Purely natural laws, therefore, with merely natural sufferings, are all that can remain to God without true moral relations to broaden, give direction and rightfulness to his government, to put it under an eternal constitution of things, and thus in harmony with his work hitherto. If we are to deal honestly with utilities, we must let them alone, let them show what they are, and not make up our account on this side or on that with gratuitous inflictions; we must not tamper with the market before we open trade. The useful as the useful merely contains and expresses its own force precisely, and is perverted by interference. Thus again we should get back to physical nature, and this nature would not merely stand as a middle term between us and God, but would shut out the divine character entirely. We should have to do directly with nature, and with nature alone. Utilities are of her sole ordination, and a doctrine of utilities is intrinsically atheistic; so far atheistic that if a God should be recognized it could not rightly allow any interference on his part in government.

Nature, so interposed between us and God, or rather so set up in his place, gives us a discipline of prudence but not one of obedience, a training by which we become sagacious not wise, one by which the affections are extinguished by the thoughts, and a cold cunning takes the place of an holy enthusiasm. God's moral government rests primarily on the affections—out of the heart are the issues of life—and goes forth from thence to enlarge, instruct, illuminate the mind. By faith and obedience we climb into

peace and wisdom. The government of nature is divorced from the affections, appeals to the thoughts primarily, and thus in the end leaves the heart barren and disconsolate. If disaster overtakes us we have no resource. "In Hellas, at the epoch of Alexander the Great, it was a current saying, and one profoundly felt by all the best men, that the best thing of all was not to be born, and the next best to die. Of all views of the world possible to a tender and poetically organized mind in the kindred Cæsarean age, this was the noblest and the most ennobling, that it is a benefit for man to be released from a belief in the immortality of the soul, and thereby from the evil dread of death and of the gods which malignantly steals over men, like terror creeping over children in a dark room ; that as the sleep of the night is more refreshing than the trouble of the day, so death, eternal repose from all hope and fear, is better than life, as indeed the gods of the poet themselves are nothing, and have nothing, but an eternal blessed rest."* Nature when she deserts us in appearance, deserts us in fact. The thoughts lie outside the affections, and can not by their correction control those deeper seats of life. Our stoicism is inanimate and dead, mere torpidity. It is light that has warmth in it, that can at once reveal and quicken. It is truth which has a moral, personal basis, that brings at the same instant intellectual and spiritual life to the soul of man.

A moral government can accept additional sanctions which are in harmony with it, as they express the personal care of the ruler ; as they lead to pure morality, always resting back upon it ; as they may be more immediately operative than it on ignorant, indolent, feeble perceptions. Pure morality is flexible under the personal element, since its products are personal, its laws personal, its prime per-

* Mommsen's History of Rome, vol. iv. p. 698.

suasion personal. Personal influence is its spiritual atmosphere. Hence the subject easily recognizes the rightfulness of constraint. Tyranny stands in distinction from this just government in that it gets back into the region of force, deserting that of rights. Pains as pains merely, always have this issue, they cast both ruler and ruled out of the moral realm. Nor can any utilities save the fall, since spiritual claims antedate uses, are not for uses, can not be met by uses. There is a moral personality in man which submits freely to a moral law, but not to force even in behalf of a real good. I may not manage my neighbor's property, much as it may need management; and I may no more do it for his interest, than I may for my own. The quicker we find this personality, and the more heartily we recognize it, the better our government will be. God's government is supreme in this regard; its whole secret is here.

There is also another bearing of these truths. We have spoken of the denial of a primitive moral element. This denial not only sweeps away rights and so government, it destroys liberty, and thus a second time subverts government, except it be the control of efficient forces. A law of nature becomes at once the exclusive type of law, and a law of nature implies a force or forces that secure the specified results. If there are no such forces, then there is no law. Moral law proper, that is, a law struggling to transcend and to control the facts, can not be, for the facts contain and express every law. Realized efficiencies open to registration must prevail, and to talk about any other law, simply as enjoining any other form of action, is to delude ourselves with words. We might as well command that gravity should be directly as the distance, and term this a law, as to command, Thou shalt not kill, when the effective conditions of murder are present, and suppose

the facts of the case altered by our injunction. If we ourselves, as a new composition of forces, can be thrown into the general problem, and modify results, very well ; but this transformation is not reached by liberty on our part, nor by our address to liberty on the part of others. We have altered the complexity, but not the character of the facts. The law of gravity is not suspended by supporting the object ready to fall. Forces working in given ways are the only constituents of laws, and what God or men may wish or order is another thing quite, is no law in the sense that it has anything to do, as a mere wish or command, with results. It affects them, and so gains the rank of a law, only as it becomes itself a force. The moral features of the problem are illusory, the physical or forceful ones only are real. The wish operates, not by consent of the soul, but as in itself a subtle efficiency, like that which pervades automatic action and instinct ; as in some way getting hold, like a sense-perception, directly of our constitution. Moral terms and moral distinctions thus become a blind method of putting physical facts, or they are nothing. The moral kingdom as a kingdom, and the moral rule as a rule, are abolished, since the soul answers not to commands but to forces, is worked not by elections but by efficiencies.

Once admit necessity and the melancholy descent to materialism is logically inevitable. The time we take for it will depend on the keenness of our insight. The connection between human actions and their conditions is conceded to be absolute. In this its fundamental feature, the intellectual world is identical with the physical. Moreover, it rests back everywhere on the physical, takes up the physical into itself. States of body, activities of brain, are incident to every mental state. The question at once arises ; Which of the two series controls the other ?

Do mental states induce nervous states, or nervous states mental states? Since absolute fixedness is now recognized as belonging to both alike, it becomes necessary to refer the special to the general, the narrower to the broader series of facts, and to make physical conditions the controlling element in intellectual states. Only thus can we conceive of a medium of efficiency between the motive and the action, the impression and the results in conduct that flow from it. Many observations come in to confirm the view; we pass by easy stages from facts, physical in their bearing, to those purely intellectual, and liberty, already set aside, gives us no boundary line. One more inference, as natural as those already made, and the work is done; mental events and the concurrent cerebral changes are opposite sides, diverse bearings, of the same thing.

Why not? The only material point under discussion in a diversity of natures was long ago yielded when mental and physical facts were grouped under one law, that of causation.

"It is," says Müller, "the undeniable teaching of history, that the obliterating the distinction between spirit and nature always ends in naturalizing spirit and never in spiritualizing nature." Why should such a controversy end otherwise? Spirit is always called on to yield its own law, its own essential nature to that of matter, and this done, the accidents one after another fall in. There remains, having identified the laws of the two, nothing in behalf of which to wage a warfare. Subtile phenomena are too familiar among physical facts to lead us, for this reason, to seek for the affections, thoughts, volitions, as a series of necessary interlocked states, a special reference. The underlying efficiency being a necessary one affiliates at once with physical force, and carries with it its phenomena.

We hold the following to be first principles in our moral constitution, to have the relation of postulates to moral discipline. (1) Liberty rests on spontaneity, and involves the power to do or not to do the actions under consideration. In either event the final and sufficient reference is not to motives, but to choices. (2) Liberty lies in choice, and not in the relation between choice and the actions which follow from it. These may suffer physical arrest, and the freedom of the soul remain unimpaired. Liberty, in its higher sense, is a question of the soul's power; in its lower sense, of the body's efficiency. Bolts may interfere with the latter, but have nothing to do with the former. Herein is the contrast of our Saviour's words: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." (3) Obligation is proportioned to and dependent on power. The power at any moment present to discern and perform duty, for that moment, defines duty. (4) The sense of right is primitive and central in our moral constitution, is at once intuitive and emotional, is the ground of duty and so of all government that reaches the dignity of an ethical law. (5) Duty is, therefore, always changing, is progressive, turning immediately on the lines of conduct open to our apprehension, level to our ethical judgments.

The fact that there is scarcely a trace of moral insight in the lower tribes of men, does not militate with this view, that conscience is a primitive power. A like ignorance of numbers is also found. A race that distinguishes numbers as far as five shows therein a power to pass this limit, and one who attaches any censure to any act holds the rudiments of a moral nature. The only sufficient disproof in any person or tribe of ethical faculties is the inability to receive, in this direction, any cultivation. The fantastic and the absurd in morals are as reconcilable with the doc-

trine of a primitive power as with that of an acquired, conventional respect for the useful. If duty is grounded solely in use, then ethical principles, so established, ought especially to be serviceable. It is a portion of our view that conscience, unaided by knowledge, takes hold in a blind, insufficient way; that it renders correct judgments only under correct statements of conduct. Extreme and irrational decisions are normal to it in minds characterized by ignorance and intellectual aberrations. The fact that the moral nature takes hold, in the beginning, in an authoritative though very blind way, of human action, does not unfit it for exercising its appropriate rôle. If it could do nothing save on complete and purely rational principles, it would find nothing to do. It would be a light shut up within walls.

It is not its office directly to disperse ignorance, but to shine through ignorance as it is able. If ignorance were absolutely opaque to it, the ignorant would wholly lack guidance; and our guide would not offer himself till we could with relative ease dispense with him. Moral government is in this allied to all government, to all progress, that it is able to gain ground by means of movements most blind and insufficient. That authority is not proportioned to the justice or wisdom of the precept, is a fact in the discipline of men that makes strongly for the primitive character of conscience, and one also which fits it to deal with the blind, the willful, the vicious. Pure reason is too pure, too supersensual, for the base. A power that moves toward reason, that enforces whatever measure of it we may now have, that sets up lines of authority even though they be mistaken ones, is what is wanted, and this is conscience. When reason is fully enthroned, conscience as latent authority is included in it; the two become practically identical. A new dissolution may disclose the

silent element, like latent heat, but it is evoked only by analytic force. Herein is the weakness of the wisest utility, that the very coldness of its rationality restricts it in doing its most urgent work, that of ruling the irrational. The most partial and perverted government enfolded a principle of government is far better than no government, and this nucleus of life we find in our moral constitution. It can lay hold of the most untoward conditions, and commence control. It can shape and reshape its precepts, put them in closer connection with principles, and enforce them at every stage. It furnishes a state that by revolution can pass up to freedom. Utility does not meet the conditions of this growth, because it fails of authority, especially in its earlier, feebler forms; and the conventional sentiment by which it is proposed to sustain it can have little or no hold on a constitution not predisposed by its own powers to obedience. Brutes may herd by instinct, by direct emotional adaptations; men may institute laws under incipient constitutional forces, but conventional sentiment that finds no nourishment in primary powers or feelings expresses little or nothing, certainly not that majestic impulse which is the unfolding life of an individual, a nation, a race, which contains in it the germs of all civil rule and spiritual edification.

CHAPTER VII.

Immortality.

THE first belief on which religion rests is that in the being of God, complete in power, wisdom, goodness. A second belief scarcely less requisite to it is that in immortality. If the first is needful as a starting-point to religious faith and action, to the higher play of our personal life, the second is needful to impart to this activity its appropriate breadth and power. If our present existence bounds the life of man, its field is far too narrow, its motives far too immediate and restricted, its incentives far too feeble, to put the soul in living, sustained contact with God, or in hopeful fellowship with his work. Under such conditions wisdom almost necessarily sinks down to prudence, faith to foresight, obedience to sagacity, and hope to the impressions of the passing hour. Indeed, the dreams of immortality will not easily fade out of the human soul. Though the doctrine may be denied, there will linger a noble, despairing struggle for earthly renown, a place in memory with the illustrious dead. We brighten our horizon by these slight traces of the setting sun.

The conviction of the certainty of a future life will wax and wane with that of the being of God. The same causes that affect the one will act on the other. The scientific habit of thought, as opposed to the philosophical, the spiritual, has weakened the hold of both truths in many minds. A portion at least of those who cling to immortality do it in a despairing way, by a stiffened tendril of faith, by an instinctive impulse, rather than by a clear conviction, a touching of the rock of truth, and establishing thereon tenacious points of growth, a foothold for

living forces. "There are three points of religious belief, regarding which intuition (or instinct) and logic are at variance—the efficacy of prayer, man's free-will, and a future existence. If believed, they must be believed, the last without the countenance, the two former in spite of the hostility of logic." This passage from Mr. Greg deservedly draws from Mr. Martineau the censure of being "absolute Pyrrhonism, subversive alike of knowledge and faith."* This unbelief is a wrong done our higher nature, one subversive of its first principles. Till we can rest with quiet conviction on the laws of our own spiritual constitution, we can rest in no promises addressed to it. If we are immortal, that immortality must take deep hold of our spiritual nature, and through it furnish us sufficient proofs, if we are able to see them. The facts of our constitution, of the divine government and the divine love, are too intimately associated with a future life to leave that life a matter of conjecture, of weary hope, to those who search for its evidences at the right point, with a comprehending spirit.

It can not be that the divine hand so fails in cunning as to allow the human soul, ready to be sped by this strong impulse—almost the strongest as it defines the force of every other—to suddenly fall, like an arrow that at the instant of discharge has lost the string. The history of individuals, races, nations will not allow the conclusion; this belief has from the beginning been in one way or another at work in the world. If the fact does not prove the doctrine, it proves that there lies somewhere proof very pertinent to its discussion.

Nor can we leave the assertion of immortality to Revelation alone. The Scriptures assume it as they assume the being of God. If these two doctrines were to rest on

* Studies of Christianity, p. 279.

the Scriptures for support instead of supporting them, the difficulties of proof would be indefinitely increased. Without an antecedent faith in a future life, Revelation labors under a heavy burden. It finds the mind distrustful inattentive, indisposed ; wrapped up in impressions and methods of proof too narrow to receive its evidence, or to justly weigh it when advanced. The foundations of a faith in a future life, lie outside of Revelation, and ought, therefore, to be disclosed independently of it. Revelation may indeed greatly strengthen our convictions ; it may make plainer the grounds of our belief, bring our immortality to light, but it is immortality which gives promise of Revelation, not Revelation which lays in our own constitution and in the government of God the foundations of immortality.

The case is not as strong, it is true, in reference to a future life as in reference to the being of God ; yet the one truth, like the other, lies in the way to Revelation. First, the spiritual government of God and then the scope of it prepare us for his intervention and guidance. The inspiration of prophet and apostle rests antecedently on theism, and so on the faith in a future life, incident thereto. Christ, when urged at this point by the Sadducees, simply fell back on a more penetrative interpretation of the Old Testament, its implications, its assumptions. God is not the God of the dead but of the living. The field of Providence is absurdly narrowed by this limitation of our life. Infinite attributes become futile, dealing only with finite, transient products. The force of the inference is due in some sense to its remoteness. The Fatherhood of God finds no sufficient application under the narrow conditions of this life. Union of man with God carries the doctrine of immortality. The mind passes first from man to God,—the spiritual nature of the inferior, the sign and

symbol of that of the superior—and from man and God in fellowship to immortality.

On grounds so deeply hidden in our nature is it that the doctrine of immortality is generally prevalent among men, is closely interlocked with every religion, is assumed by Revelation, and becomes one whose distinctness is proportioned to the firmness of the soul's belief, first in itself, second in God. Mr. Greg unites a failing confidence in free-will to a faltering belief in a future life. There is here more than the affinity of kindred feelings.

The Scriptures, by virtue of their purpose, hold somewhat in abeyance the doctrine of immortality: they do not allow future and less urgent relations to overshadow present and more urgent ones; they do not bring vividly forward conditions alien in kind or intensity to those now about us, and with a frenzy of hope or fear break up the peaceful, healthful flow of our being. The Old Testament especially keeps every eye within the range of its own horizon. The New Testament, enlarging and spiritualizing as it does the duties and scope of life, bringing its disciples face to face with great dangers and long, discouraging conflicts, more frequently reminds them of the inclusive character of the kingdom for which they struggle, and of a future which holds so many of its rewards. As the service becomes exacting the soul is sustained by a corresponding breadth of view. Yet is it not in all cases the secret of a sober life to see the future only through a diaphanous present, to labor toward it by the light it sheds on the work in hand? An alien future—and a future of eager and indolent hopes must ever be alien—drawing us to itself, makes us aliens to the present, to its duties and developments, and so estranges our hearts from the very discipline we are undergoing, its joys and its triumphs; causes us to grow dizzy and slip on the very ladder we are climbing.

It can hardly be gain for us to die, till it is Christ for us to live. The human soul is too easily flurried and frenzied to abide close under either the hopes or the fears of a future life, and yet maintain the equanimity, the relish of pleasure, requisite to its own growth. That the background of immortality is not more vividly colored seems due to the fact, that the inspired artists are dealing with the foreground of duty, are not dreaming but working, not predicting but shaping the future. The fields we tread yield more beauties and more fruits under a veiled light than under a scorching, midday sun.

The weak hold which some earnest natures now have of the doctrine of immortality we believe to be incident to that scientific form of thought which finds extreme expression in evolution, as an inclusive factor of belief. There are in the universe, according to this theory in its ultimate statement, no increments, no new forces, hence no fundamental differences. What is offered in one part strikes deeply into all parts. Nothing is isolated in any one relation. We can not isolate man. The whole animal and vegetable kingdoms lie back of him, and along side of him, not in one part but in all parts of his nature ; and what we hope for him we should hope for each allied series. Immortality can not be conceded as a gratuity here and withheld there, when that and this have sprung up from one source under one law. Life is one in kind everywhere, everywhere incident to a physical organism ; and to look for it when its constant, universal condition is wanting, would be to look for an arm without a body to nourish it. Life, though it combines high intelligence, bears no more impress of immortality than any other incident of being. It is one wave in the eternal flow of forces, and sinks as easily back into the universal flood as another. We have no reason to affirm immortality of any life, or if we affirm it

of any to withhold it from any. The spiritual nature of life, as an independent essence or principle, if it lingers at all in scientific thought, grows weaker and weaker, and the proof for the immortality of the human soul, as an "indiscernible" something which decay and death cannot reach, vanishes. It may well vanish. We know far too little of the nature of life or of the essence of spirit, if indeed we are not quite misled by the images the words suggest—to rest any assertion on alleged ultimate qualities of souls. The images of immortality, chrysalis and butterfly, go for nothing with science, for they are illustrations, not arguments. Nor does any enlargement of intelligence in man aid our proof. Intelligence, all of it, is the slow growth of external and internal conditions, is all of it the product of physical facts, and finds its full office in dealing with those facts. To say that such a nature is too exalted for its circumstances is to forget its relations to those circumstances; to say that it ought to have a broader field for more permanent unfolding is to invoke aid from a foreign source, an intuitive moral nature. Intelligence, looked upon purely as intelligence, as a fact in the physical world, a manifestation incident to complex organism, gives us an argument adverse to immortality. As we pass upward the spiritual is more and more closely united to the physical, more and more constrained by it, unfolded under it, and so limited to it. Every specialization is a limitation, a closer union. Proof every year increases that each intellectual effort has an equivalent expression in nervous action, and most are prepared to give this principle the extension of a complete statement. As the flame about the burning wood, so the soul of man plays about the molecular changes of brain-tissue, and there is little inclination in science, and less ability, to separate the two. When the torch of life flickers and goes out in its socket,

the scientist hardly feels prompted to inquire what has become of its light. High intelligence, therefore, as the product of complex and special combinations, least of all forms of force admits of composite transfer, most of all in transfer loses its peculiar character.

Under evolution the moral nature yields no new element, it is but one manifestation of our intellectual nature. It is a generalized experience, an inherited tendency, a modified instinct, or all these combined, and furnishes no fresh ground for our argument. It rests downward and spreads outward, like its co-ordinate forces, and is as restricted in its uses as are they. One plant may grow higher than another, but none touch the heavens; there is nothing in any of them transcendental.

That which is to return to heaven must come down from heaven, that which is to show itself spiritual must be a spirit, that which arises under transient conditions must disappear with those conditions, must submit itself fully to them. There is not and can not be the slightest promise to man of immortality under a doctrine of evolution, strictly held and clearly realized. All things are in substance and in law shifting, fluent, submissive, the higher the more so, and we might as well predicate immortality of a sunset, as something too brilliant to fade away; or of the unsubstantial form of a summer's cloud, as something too subtle to be dissolved and lost, as of the human soul.

We come back then to philosophy, more particularly to our moral nature, and to that view of it which makes it something more than a product of uses, as yielding the only sufficient proof of immortality. The scientist will show the clearness of his thought in at once denying this doctrine, and the philosopher in resting it exclusively on a moral basis. This nature gives a difference, a broad

division, between the life of man and the lives below him. He is no longer burdened with the immortality of shell-fish, squid and polyp, or even of dog and horse, as reposing on proof the same as that which establishes his own immortality. He cuts himself loose from the motley, and from this point of view, ignoble, throng below him, and plants his hope wholly on that which is peculiar to him, his moral nature with its supplementary rational powers.

This nature lays down a boundary line, and puts its possessor, in reference to the world about him, on the farther side. Ethical insight, with freedom, its accompanying power, enables man to take possession of the world for his own ends. He is not a product of it, born in due time out of it, but is over it, able to modify and use it with a final end and independent force. We can no more argue from the scope and laws of the physical world to man than we can from the dwelling to its occupant. The fortunes of the one do not include or control those of the other. Man in his powers comes from above nature, is beyond the range of its necessary laws, and may well enough, therefore, have quite another destiny; nay, such a destiny is indicated by a position so exalted and so anomalous.

He is not one in a series, slowly evolving itself upward; one of a race, slowly emigrating into new fields of life along many lines of progress, but he crowns all series, confronts all races, holds in final poise and sufficient service the physical creation thus far. To those then who recognize a spiritual realm, and make, as they must make, that realm ultimate, man touches it, unites the physical world to it, and permanently lifts the whole up into relationship with this seat of life. That man's life is also phenomenal, ephemeral, becomes a supposition that, by a stolen march, seizes the defile by which we enter the spiritual kingdom, and holds it for the earth-force, the blind demiurge, be-

neath us. Spirituality has no significance without immortality. The kingdom of God is not other or more than the kingdom of the world, if it is permeable everywhere, mutable everywhere, under the same shifting, physical forces. The new term, pure spontaneity, free spirit, given in man, is the first term of a new kingdom.

To this branch of our nature we must turn for proof of immortality, proof quite sufficient if we believe in an intuitive moral law, established in our own constitution, enthroned in the nature of God, and so over the spiritual universe. The moral law is too broad, far too broad, for the present life merely. It does not fit into it. It devotes it to ends absurdly ill-timed, the vaporings of enthusiasm, if there is no opportunity to win them, to complete them, beyond the present hour. Why should one pursue a moral ideal if that ideal is to lead him in a vain effort to the borders of life, and then forever escape him? Virtue, high virtue, aspiring, wrestling virtue, is a chimera, a spiritual delusion, a fine but foolish frenzy, if virtue is not deep-seated in the powers of the soul, and that, too, of a soul bracing itself for a great and a growing victory; if virtue is only the necessary, almost mechanical, adjustment of mind and body to transient conditions for the quiet of the passing hours. We might as well try to mistake the stolidity with which we settle down to the hardships of an uncomfortable voyage for heroism, inspiration, as to mistake the bending of the mind to the utilities of its present state of being for a mastery over them, a sufficient nourishment of the soul. Utility is the appropriate morality of a purely earthly existence, of a life in simple ministration to wants; since it is rounded into the range of forces actually bearing on man; since it fits the mind with the least worry, the lightest disappointment, the simplest labor, to run quietly in its own narrow circle of being. No disturb-

ing attractions from beyond the system, are allowed to enter. Merely intellectual life is as rightly turned downward to utilities as upward to duties.

These utilities, in our hasty years, are to be carefully watched and eagerly gathered, for they are quickly lost. A keen, sharp eye may well be set to this service. To these ends the brute bends his faculties and we may bend ours, if we have no higher purposes than fall to him. Such purposes we have, and through them alone the intellect wins a higher ministration.

The moral nature transcends the limits of our present life, and brings, in many particulars, a broader rule, a secret, spiritual adaptation. In the range of its motives it quite oversteps the gains of the present. These motives turn primarily on character, and the only ground on which this high estimate of character as opposed to pleasure can be maintained is the worth of the one in reference to the other. But this worth rests on durability, immortality, mastery. In the competition of a single hour, a spiritual pleasure, as a present, concrete state, has no necessary and universal precedence over an intellectual or a physical enjoyment. The three are rated by the part they take in the sum-total of being ; and no supreme importance, no such importance as the moral nature assigns it, can be given to character, the strictly spiritual element, unless this has a deeper relation to our welfare than it discloses in the scanty years of our present existence. Indeed, character can not be kept up to its proper estimate on a thorough utilitarian basis. It sinks into something quite other than itself. Nothing could be more saddening, exasperating, disappointing than the labors, conflicts, aspirations of virtue undergone on this narrow field of strife. The birth-throes of our moral being issue in nothing ; we are never through with them. All that is locked up in such words

as the sense of obligation, nobility of character, greatness of soul, personal liberty, moral worth, on which ethical speech is ever ringing its manifold and stirring appeals, is little indeed, if the soul's strength is after all no store-house for virtue, but we let slip in due time our spiritual possessions by the same law by which we shed our teeth. No rational being can, or will lay, or ought to lay, the same stress, or anything like the same stress, on character, if it is as evanescent as are the competing pleasures of appetite, as he must and will ascribe to it if it be, in its spiritual elements, immortal. The moral nature habitually attaches to character the importance which would fall to it on the supposition of immortality. It thus presupposes a future life, and is irrational without it. In opposing character to happiness it does it by virtue of the superior power, the time-element, in it. The gains of creation, law over chaos, are due to time.

This range of motives is also seen in the steady maintenance by conscience of future good as opposed to present good, and the good of others as opposed to our own good. If this life is all, and the sum of our pleasures in it our entire gain, then prudence would caution us as to the conditions on which we let any enjoyment slip. The largest aggregate of enjoyment is the question which interests us, and remote, secondary and uncertain returns must, in the comparison with present, direct and certain pleasures, suffer severely. We shall not be disposed to speculate, and incur risks, any more in moral than in money gains. There is, moreover, no reproach of conscience to trouble one in grasping his indulgences, if he decides that this life is his entire life, and that its law is the law of highest pleasure, as it should be. This supposition eliminates at once and forever any thing peculiar and preëminent in the moral sentiment. The soul grasps its gratifications as unhesitatingly as the merchant his profit.

If conscience issues an edict of its own, holding us aloof from coveted enjoyments, with no clear promise of coming equivalents and on conditions other than those of a fair trade, it thereby shows itself not to be a law of prudence evolved from the experience of passing years, but a primary power. The moral sense not only attaches more value to character than it ought, it gives far less value to pleasure than falls to it under any other supposition than this most pregnant one, that our present existence is disciplinary in reference to a future state. Its estimates are all made up on this tacit assumption, and can neither be justified or enforced without it. Nor can these tendencies of the moral nature be referred to a half-conventional, half-instinctive sentiment, transmitted and strengthened by inheritance. They have none of the characteristics of an instinct. They decline with intelligence, and increase with intelligence. The law of instinct is the reverse of this. Rational impulses stimulate the conscience, they repress instincts ; conscience is no instinct.

A second direction in which the moral sentiment transcends a law of uses, and so the conditions of our present life, is found in the type of conduct it permanently commands. No censure is too severe with it for the desertion of truth, no matter what the inducements to such a betrayal ; no praise is too great with it for a bold, faithful adherence to truth, how little so ever is gained by it. This is a hair-brained judgment, if truth after all only ministers to pleasure, and takes rank with the other means of enjoyment. A martyr is a fanatic of the most extreme, refractory kind, since he not only forfeits all pleasure for one pleasure ; he loses this also by the very means he takes to secure it. The relaxed hand of death holds nothing, not even the reward of integrity. He should reason concerning virtue as Falstaff concerning honor. Immortality,

must be or there can be no wise surrender of life for the truth. If it be said that the martyr at least escapes the shame and reproach of betrayal, yes, but why should there be such shame and reproach? Why do we not feel in the moral conflict as does the Indian brave in his warfare, that it is folly, not courage, to sacrifice life when nothing can be won by the sacrifice?

The attitude of the soul which leads it to exclaim in the presence of death, "Here I stand, I can do no otherwise, God help me," is sheer frenzy. If there is no good save the good which comes to living men, and this faithfulness of the soul is betraying it to its final overthrow, we have a fallacy like that of the miser, who can not use the very wealth he values, who destroys its worth by an overestimate.

There may seem to be grandeur in self-sacrifice, in unquestioning obedience to a higher law, but it is folly none the less, if law and life perish together in these ethical explosions. It is allowing a gusty wind of sentiment to flare our torch into this flash of light and so extinguish it. The law of morals can be one of self-sacrifice through each of its degrees only as it is disciplinary, putting us firmly back on the benevolent, the divine impulse, and so giving us a true start for immortality. This is a tantalizing law if it offers us a race, trains us, allows us no repose, and then remorselessly and forgetfully crowds us back into oblivion. Our moral nature is a restless impulse of endless waste and worry, making us of all men most miserable, if this life stands by itself alone. As ephemera we should be allowed the joys of ephemera, and be left to dance out the brief day in our own sunbeam. This is not saying that the moral law is a burden, the moral life a drudgery, but that it can not be sustained without its own proper conditions, its own inspirations, hopes. How can a man be put to choose

between death and the moral law? If he chooses the law he sinks with it in darkness; if he rejects the law he conjures up a ghost of retribution to embitter the existence he has saved. Ruin lies equally in either path, whether he lose consciousness or lose honor; so extreme is the exigency into which this highest nature of his drives him.

The moral law has a sweep, and must be operated with a sweep, beyond that of this life, or it can not clear itself, can not revolve freely, and bring forward in due order and circuit those supreme motives with which the soul is held to duty, its hopes maintained, its life fed. The rational spirit must feel the in-rushing winds of eternity, an atmosphere wafted to it from beyond the grave, or its aspirations are smothered, and slowly expire, oppressed by the heavy, sluggish air of a too narrow enclosure. Here lie the weightiest proofs of immortality, those of coherence, completeness, adequacy. Without immortality to support it, we set up in the moral nature a transcendental law, suicidal in its highest, and fanciful in all its applications, evoking desires it can not satisfy, imposing duties it can not reward, and enkindling a life that it smothers down again at its maximum. A wheel arrested at the outset with sudden crash and collision, would be the type of the moral force, and of the part it plays in the world. Crime, shame, remorse, punishments are its first ruin, its *dissecta membra*. The law of animal life does its work well, the law of human life is fitful and extravagant, enhances actual evils and adds imaginary ones. Its motion, like that of a balance wheel, partially magnetic, in a watch, is wayward and fluctuating, so controlled by remote affinities that it can no longer divide and sub-divide our days into safe and equal sections of pleasure.

Our argument at this point is, that the moral law actually transcends time, and so holds in its constitution, by

clear implication, immortality. It does this by the motives it enforces, by the standard of conduct it sets up. The same range of application is also implied in the defective results with which it now satisfies itself, and in the incipient character of the products in which, under the most favorable conditions, it issues. The wicked are unequally, often slightly, punished, the righteous are partially rewarded; all awards are incomplete. There are more iteration and threat in the law than are met by the on-coming penalties. Positive law, human law must be constantly called in to supplement moral law, and set it in action. We are struck with inequality, insufficiency and discordance. The world is needlessly harrowed by conscience, if these immediate results are the sum-total of issues. Everywhere there are deficiency and excess; one is callous, another unduly conscientious. We have stages of growth rather than processes of administration. The precision of the animal kingdom is lost in the spiritual one. The intellect of man brings with it inferior rather than superior government, indirect and insufficient ideas in place of direct and sufficient sensations. This moral sway, this rule of righteousness, calls for time to clear itself; the very time that was included in its purview when it was set up.

So also the product in which moral discipline issues implies its scope. There is but one fitness, one consolation, in the death of a good man, that he shall live again. The extinction of such an one is a loss to himself, to the present sum of good, to the promise of good in the future; it would take place in utter disregard of the conflict between good and evil, which is the one crowning feature of the spiritual universe. This strife is most painfully belittled, dwarfed, if its most faithful combatants perish in the moment of victory. The character of a good man is a serviceable power, a deserving power, a germinant power.

Its resources of growth have not approached exhaustion, it is simply making ready for normal growth. Like the plant still fed by the nourishment of the seed, it has hardly entered on its own career. There is in it yet no complete cycle of being, it is preparing for a career. Experience, trial are incipient, preliminary, and, without an opportunity for the use of the powers so unfolded, they become in a large measure abortive. Our spiritual nature is peculiarly ill-devised, if it is thus to wither in the green leaf; if we are to discern good, freely engage in its pursuit, and miss it just as the conditions of success are present. This life is to the spirit embryo life, and if embryo life, then death must yield the conditions of birth. It is not true, as the poet laments, that we find the keys of life only to open the gates of death. There is no deeper accusation against the creative plan or its development.

The earthly immortality that falls to great moral natures, to Socrates, Paul, Marcus Aurelius, John Calvin, shows the hidden vigor of this form of being. Shall the shadow thus abide and not the thing itself?

Man's moral nature gives a power capable of immortality, furnishes a reason for immortality, and so sets up a claim for immortality. A nature in us and in society, so rudimentary, so germinant in the years that fall to it, so far off from symmetrical growth, can allow arrest no more than creation or evolution. Each step may be better than the preceding, and in reference to it *must* therefore be; a must holding in itself the cogency of eternal fitness; a must that includes the growth of the individual with that of society, since both rest on the same principle, inherent potentialities. No point is reached within observation by the growing mind and heart, in which life is not intrinsically more valuable, more beautiful, and hence none in which it is not more imperative; for the good and the

beautiful are the imperatives of the moral world. Powers carry with them rights ; this is an axiom of human society. Undeveloped powers set up claims, include rights, in all the kindred jurisprudence of the spiritual world.

A distinct argument for immortality is the earnest hope for it which clings to the human soul. What man, unless he has made a ruin of life, contemplates annihilation with pleasure? Who, loving life, rejoicing in it with the pure enthusiasm of power, can approach close to this idea of extinction without a shudder, without a sudden loss of hope, a sense that the congealing hand of death has already touched him? The aversion of the soul to annihilation is deep-seated and instinctive, like that felt to death itself chiefly because it sits as warden under the deep shadow of mysterious walls, at the entrance of unexplored regions. "More light" is the despairing cry with which the unassured soul enters on these explorations. Men hope, it may be said, for many things, and those hopes are no prediction. Yet this argument which we rest on the hopes of men is none the less a very strong one. Its force is due to our confidence in the moral nature of God. A hope which is an inspiration, which is to the soul as morning light, a hope, yearning, stronger, clearer as the spirit gains power, is a promise of God, a rational anticipation of his purpose, the fore-running indication of his love. It is better than specific words, since it lays hold so deeply, so freely of his integrity, the moral soundness and gracious favor of God. God knows the human heart, knows its best impulses, and will not allow them to be misdirected and baffled completely, forever. The very being of such a hope is an argument ; it is light and comes from a source of light ; it is a soul making answer to its affiliations, the echo of time to eternity. To deny this is to impeach the soundness, the goodness of God.

Indeed this is the precise basis of the argument, faith, confidence in God. We need, in order to apprehend it, ethical insight, and the strong sense of obligation which accompanies it. A morality of utilities, whatever play it may find with men, is inapplicable to God. Obligation can not come to him as a conventional, hereditary or instinctive sentiment, it must be the final fiat of reason. Confidence in God as a perfect moral being is faith, and this faith it is which lays hold of a worthy, stimulating hope as a virtual promise. It is not one, indeed, freed from conditions, but one which under conditions we must hold to as certainly as to the ethical character and force of the divine government. God can tacitly promise, and does promise, to meet the aspirations he kindles, to pour light into the eyes he creates. Every thought of immortality, every recognition of it as a theory that can be, becomes a divine assurance that it is a theory that shall be. If we yearn for it, with the constitutional force of a spiritual nature, this is proof that he has provided us for it and so it for us; the thought, the hope, the labor are the very activities by which we take hold of God's grace in this direction. Such faith is a perfectly rational element; it is that by which we gain daily strength from the integrity of men. It is rightly said, it shall be unto us according to our faith, since faith is the casting of our spirits, themselves loyal to truth, on the spirit of God, loyal to the same truth; it is the fellowship of virtue, than which nothing is a safer reliance, a more rational dependence.

Hence when Revelation comes, assuming our nature, it also assumes its legitimate field of development, and simply bears us forward toward the goal. All who have laid hold of God, who have drawn near, have felt this promise of his, this lasting fellowship, this stealing of his life downward and our lives upward. What, indeed, is a

spiritual union to him but this? This portion of the argument can not be resolved into known terms of definite value for every man. Is it, therefore, of less worth? The reliance that comes from it is like that which binds friend to friend, and can not be taken beyond the bounds of faith. Confidence in immortality has thus always had a large personal element in it, has been strengthened up to the point of efficiency by belief in God, and direct fellowship with him.

Another argument, resting in the same direct way on the integrity of God, is the fact that this doctrine of immortality vindicates itself by its practical results, by conferring great and increasing benefits on man. It plays into our powers in a wholesome, stimulating, living way. It enlarges their scope, makes them cognizant of the bearings of action, and evokes noble and sustained effort. This truth thus shows itself an efficient and valid constituent of our present moral discipline. If God allows a motive of this kind to do this exalted work, if it can do this work, it is because we have in it a true, a real force. Illusion can not take the place of facts, and the moral system maintain its soundness, God his truthfulness.

Every argument adduced, every argument we are able to adduce, finds its support in the ethical nature. It is this which is out of harmony with the restricted life we here lead, this that craves and demands more, that is sending into the future vanishing lines of activity. Without this nature, the freedom it involves, the responsibility it develops, the character it contemplates, the possibilities it unlocks, the faith it calls forth, there would be no sufficient ground to believe in immortality. In disturbing, then, the foundations of our moral constitution, we disturb those of a future life. As a fact, those who hold feebly this belief are resolving the duties of morality into prudential precepts.

They are shut off from the heavens because they have clipped the wings by which alone they can mount thither.

So deep-seated is our plea for immortality. It is constitutionally ours, ours as interwoven with the law of our spiritual life, ours as in fellowship with God, ours as being to us an intimation, a promise, resting on his faithfulness and love. Here we stand by faith in ourselves, by faith in God ; and whatever may be the fluctuations of feeling, we go down to death with the declaration and claim and hope of immortality on our lips. We cast in our lot with that great multitude who have felt and followed the instinctive, insatiable impulse. If the scientist must disbelieve, and we see not how he can believe, we profoundly pity the darkness in which he is enclosed. There is not more difference between the corpse of a friend and that friend himself, with warm hand and eager eye, than between a world without God and one with him, than between mortality and immortality. We can sit in silence with the bereaved, but we can not deny that the world is bereft, that it grows cold, cheerless, rayless under the shadow of the gates of death. The scientist can not find or define life, he can not find or define the human soul, he can not find or define God, he can not prove immortality or define its conditions, he must then be left alone with his dead. He may say to himself, I have lost nothing. Life was but a process, an activity, and death, decay, are equally processes, activities ; processes as scientifically interesting and exact as those which took place in the living body of him whom I loved ; the universe without God is precisely in its laws what it would be with God, less only an intangible conception ; and the years to come, they are secured to the on-going of these forces into which I and those with me lapse again. Neither do I lose anything by death ; it will only carry gently away, or sweep off with a stern but kind stroke,

these anxieties and fears, the dread, that now oppress me. We can not so feel, nor can we so speak. Our desires have gone out toward a great, positive, growing good ; we yearn for a life lifted up in power. We have set up our plea for immortality in an imperishable, universal impulse, in faith, in the large truthfulness of God. This struggle for life decided against us, and we turn in despair, willing to hasten the inevitable. This battle of the soul gained, as it is for us gained, and, armed against perplexity, we wait on progress ; we seek the light, and we are walking toward the light.



CHAPTER VIII.

Revelation.

THERE are three heads under which what we have to say on revelation may readily appear ; first, why should there be a revelation ? second, what are its relations to nature ? third, what are its relations to reason ? By revelation we understand a direct communication from God to man, one, therefore, in part at least transcending natural law. Why should there be such a communication ? Nature we have seen to be the middle term between the Creator and his rational creatures, beings to be trained in knowledge, in power, and in concurrent action with each other and with himself. That nature should remain a fixed, inviolate ground is essential to knowledge and to skill, to science and to civilization. To the degree sufficient for these ends it must be hemmed about and uninterfered with by any personal power that shall have the character of caprice, or bring relaxation or change to the discipline

entered on in it. Does this principle exclude intervention, revelation?

A belief in revelation presupposes a belief in God. The readiness with which such a revelation finds acceptance, moreover, will have much to do with the character which is ascribed to him. Many will find no difficulty, others the greatest difficulty, with intervention, according to the balance in which they hold the natural and the personal, the necessary and the free, elements in God's government. A pantheistic deity, embodied in, and arrived at through, nature, gives no opportunity for direct revelation; the nature and methods of God are already sufficiently defined under conditions adverse to revelation. No more does a divine being, arrived at by the exclusive study of natural law, though we may seem to have included in this conception the personal element, push forward to direct intercourse with men. No philosophy of necessity prepares the way for a personal disclosure of God. Fixed connections, secondary causes, fill the entire horizon. In proportion as the free, the personal, element is altered in character, or is lost sight of, will the difficulties accumulate against revelation, and the unfavorable presumptions grow apace.

The steadfastness of the divine nature, the unity of the divine plan, the sufficiency and coherence of a single method, the reverence due the Infinite, the Unchangeable, will deter the mind, reaching God through the physical universe, from accepting interventions, modifications, special adjustments and after-thoughts. Yet reasonings of this kind are very unsafe, as they often spring from the rigidity and finiteness of our own conceptions, the barrenness of our ideas, and not from any insight into the Divine Life. If the personal, the free, the spiritual, find full and hearty admission in our conception of human nature, they may well pass thence to the Divine Nature, as the best, the

most comprehensive, the most explanatory of any thing we have at hand.

We reason to the Infinite bearing with us the substance, the force, the beauty, the freedom of the finite, but casting off its restrictions. Having done this, we often surreptitiously start another argument of interpretation within the bosom of the Infinite himself, yet one whose data and conclusions rest on the same limits of thought, the same logical coherences, we have just set aside. By virtue of this reasoning, we expel from our conception of God that substance of being which, in the first instance, we assigned him. Failing to grasp, either in imagination or by logical formula, the substance without its finite restrictions, we reason from the absence of these limits to the absence of that substance, and so furtively recede from the position already taken. We undo the idea we have once made up. We reached the Infinite in holding fast to the substance and casting off its limitations. These we now restore and so miss once more the Infinite. We may reason up to God, but can not carry our finite data into and through the forms of his life. We assign to him what we find coming from him, power, personality, liberty; but we must needs attribute them under new conditions, not as they are actual in the finite, but as they are potential in the Infinite. If we once do this, we must refuse to retreat, refuse to take back again the divine attributes, because we can no longer comprehend them under the interdependencies of the finite. As a fact we often concede liberty to God, and then remove all the conditions of its exercise, concede love and at once congeal it into law. We lock up all the activities of God in his omniscience, crowd them back into some beginning of things, when he *fore* knew and *fore*-ordained. He that can *fore*-ordain can ordain. One moment of time is the type of every other. If we search for that first instant of

thought and freedom, it too will vanish. If we concede personality for a single moment, we concede it for all moments.

Revelation emphasizes the personal element in God, and gives it a position not otherwise attainable by it. Nature is thus made a midway term to God, who stands above and beyond it, who is in no way bound to it. It is inevitable that materialistic and pantheistic conceptions should gain ground on all others, if God is absolutely and forever veiled by natural law, and if his action at no point transcends it. Intervention, revelation, are requisite to restore him to his throne in the minds of men, to reseat him in personal strength over the universe which he sustains and rules. The uniformity of nature subserves a purpose, but has also a peculiar danger; revelation supplements it, relieves it of its misapprehension and partial character, and enables it to fulfill safely spiritual ends as well as intellectual and physical ones. God is a person, and as a person free: personal manifestation ceases to be alien to him. There is no weakness in it, quite the reverse; it is fitted to express a great truth, and put that truth in harmony with the wants of man.

This it does. Man craves the personal as food for his affections, food that he can not sufficiently find in the wisest laws, or the most gracious regulations. This want, normal to the constitution of man, becomes a ground for revelation, constitutes a claim for it. The personal element in God makes answer to that element in man. Faith finds a faithful Creator, and love a bosom of love on which it can rest. The probability, the fitness of revelation, lie in this correlation, in the free, sympathetic natures of God and of man, in the personality found in both, and ready, on either side, to coalesce, in its own appropriate life. Revelation makes in the spiritual world an unspeakable differ-

ence in man's emotional relations to God. Nature is instantly suffused with light and color where before it abode in darkness and coldness.

Revelation brings also a needful confirmation to the deductions of reason, and adds thereto new force. It is almost impossible to look upon the rational world primarily as a field in which good and evil are waging a spiritual conflict, and not feel the need of, the certainty of, revelation, a clear manifestation of the mind of God to encourage and guide his own in a manner that submits itself cheerfully to their grade of spiritual powers. It may be said that such an argument proves too much, that if God intervenes at all, no reason can be given why he should not be supernaturally present everywhere, and sweep the field before him. The objection does not press the thoughtful mind. Divine action may be proportionate, we may concede to it this quality. Nature is full of God, is wisely ordered by him, affords an admirable discipline both spiritual and opportune. Yet it is true that we can be aided in getting hold under this training by divine intervention, and it is not true that we can to advantage be lifted beyond its reach. We need constantly to be remanded to nature, but we go back to nature with a totally new apprehension of it, if we go forth from the presence of God. It so becomes to us in turn the revelation of God, and we walk wisely and lovingly with it. We are incarnate and must play between the physical and spiritual ; we can tarry exclusively with neither. The certainty which revelation, which the Christian Revelation, has affixed through many generations to the conclusions of innumerable devout minds,—conclusions winning the vigor of facts without being their final expression—the lustre it has given to old truths, and the brighter truths it has placed side by side with them, sufficiently show the value, the necessity, of revelation to those whose minds

are open to these considerations. The Christian Revelation has given the one line of clear, glowing, growing spiritual activity in the world's history. What it has done, that it was able to do, and for that it was given.

Our second point is the relation of revelation, the Divine Word, to nature and natural law. The two are inseparably interlocked in every variety of way. Natural law, as disclosed in the physical conditions, the nature and the growth of man, and in the growth of society, is that on which and through which the supernatural element involved in revelation is ever acting. There is no departure from nature in its general law, development; this development under its permanent conditions is merely hastened by new, outside stimulus, which it could not by itself alone have realized. Revelation includes, must include, at some point in some degree, a supernatural element; but that divine force, that spoken word, is none the less operative on nature, on the heart of man, under natural law. The prophet proclaims the truth, and that truth takes its chances with men. The prophet himself, though his experiences may often transcend the powers of his own mind, and receive a living impulse from the spiritual world, grows by the law of growth contained in his own spirit, and under the conditions of his own experience. Revelation is not a thrusting of nature down, but a more vigorous action induced in it, a restoration to it of a deeper spiritual consciousness.

The life of Christ presents this union of the natural and supernatural in revelation in the most complete and powerful form, with the largest infusion of the spiritual and divine element. Yet here we have a life, that in its entire method of unfolding, in the vast majority of its incidents, and in its transcendent influence, subjects itself to natural law, keeps itself on the plane of nature. We

have a new plant, but the soil in which it is rooted, the growth it achieves, the fruit it brings forth, indicate its perfect loyalty to the nature that envelops it, its expenditure of divine force under the conditions assigned it by the existing environment. Thus only is revelation regenerative ; thus only is it not, as against a previous divine government, revolutionary. One jot or one tittle of the divine method does not pass away without fulfillment. A revelation is an incarnation, divine life at work in human forms. Herein is spiritual life the analogue of all life.

The presumption in revelation is, in each single instance, in favor of the natural as against the supernatural ; for the natural is the staple of method. But there is no reluctance in interpretation to accept the supernatural, rather a profound joy in it, if it be sufficiently established, if it illuminate that which it touches. In this opening of the mind to the higher influence, and in this definite expectation that it will be constantly sinking into, and acting under, the lower influence, lie the poise, composure and faith of the spirit working with God. Though the presumption is against the miraculous, is in favor of the natural, as more nearly level to man's necessity, yet the mind feels no violence done it in the manifestation which boldly transcends nature ; it delights in it rather as a more distinct disclosure of the Divine Presence, as proof that helps to gather up and confirm the lines of spiritual development followed by it, proof that the divine purpose above runs measurably parallel with the thoughts of men below, proof that lifts the weary soul, for one sweet moment, out of the abstract and intellectual into the concrete and emotional.

The third inquiry is the relation of revelation to reason. Revelation submits itself to reason perfectly, as perfectly as does nature. In saying this we include in

reason our entire intellectual and ethical constitution, and the emotional life incident to its healthy activity. Revelation is fitted to this constitution under the ordinary laws of apprehension and appropriation, and so is rational in the same way in which every truth or right method is rational. Religious belief is the acceptance of facts and principles for what they have shown themselves to be, and faith is the repose of our spiritual nature on personal, moral qualities whose existence and character have been sufficiently established for us. Faith is not called on to transcend its rational basis ; it is sufficient if, in religion as in society, it adheres to it. There is an historical force in the words, *rationalist* and *rationalism*, which we should be slow to accept as sufficiently expressing our convictions of the relations of revelation and reason, but in its inherent, derivative meaning the word, *rational*, covers the law of spiritual growth equally under nature and revelation. That growth is rational, that is according to the constitution of man as a rational being ; and for it to be irrational is for it to be abortive.

Revelation ministers to reason, because reason is God's first and fundamental gift to man, is the germ of his constitution, that which determines all that is to follow. For man to neglect or misapply reason, embracing as it does the light which enters through his entire constitution, and makes the law of that constitution apparent, is for him to be recreant to his first trust, disobedient in the most central and conspicuous way to the voice of God within him. No man wisely reverences God who does not delight in and honor the nature God has given him, who does not find in it the one germ and the one revelation of life, who does not desire its highest, most complete activity, who does not separate it from its present oppressive conditions, the disastrous issues that have overtaken

it, and see by it and in it and through it the glory of God's thought present and to come. All other gifts of God are in reference to this gift, and find the fulfillment of their purpose in the development of man's spiritual powers. But his spiritual is also his rational nature. By reason we express the entire insight of the soul. It is certainly a mistaken reverence which bows reason, that by which God has made man upright, to irrational dogma or blind rite. This dogma can be to us truth only by our perception of it as such, or this rite can be to us duty only by its hold on the conscience. These are the sole points of healthy, living attachment to our free constitution, and to seek for revelation any other attachment is to degrade it. Certainly no secondary gift can, as a means of development, override our original constitution, or do any thing better for it than to unburden it and quicken it. If God gives an eye, an ear, an intuition of reason, then he submits color, sound, truth to them respectively. There is no reverence in insisting that black is white ; nor any more in affirming that the unjust and unintelligible are acceptable and profitable. Indeed to degrade the reason is to degrade all its affirmations. We must have a sound reason if we are to honor truth by any assertion whatever. An insane man can no more have an opinion for the truth than against it. A perverted and perverse nature taints its every dogma. The doctrine by which it creeps in the dust may be one of its least wholesome delusions.

We urge the rightfulness of submitting revelation freely, fully, faithfully to reason, because of the futility of any other method. The soul can not be built up by what it does not understand, nor benefited by an obedience extorted from it. Truth has a double rational basis, one more and one less complete. The mind may so apprehensively penetrate the truth as to understand and receive

it solely on the authority of its own faculties. It may also accept the truth on the testimony of another, whose knowledge and character elicit confidence. One of these methods can not be made rationally to bear down the other. If there is any conflict between them, this conflict itself must be settled by reason. The relative weight of the two forms of evidence must, in each instance, be considered, and if no balance can be struck between them, the mind must wait for further light. We may gladly accept truths concordant with reason on the grounds of revelation. but if truth so referred seems to contradict reason, it becomes a farther and deeper work of reason to reconcile the two, or to trace the error to its real source. Failing of sufficient light to do either the one or the other, it then becomes the office of reason to hold the judgment in abeyance till the grounds of a conclusion are present. Reason thus rules, and rules equally in submitting itself to testimony as in withholding its assent. If the plainest principles of our moral nature are violated by any act or precept made to rest upon revelation, reason does not at once abandon these principles, or submit them in haste to the new statement, but quietly recommits both for further consideration. It knows that it may misinterpret morality, but it knows also that it may misapprehend revelation. The claims of revelation can never be more absolute with it than those of that nature to which revelation is addressed. In other words, there is no point of will or power involved in the question, but simply reason and right, a reason that can be submitted to reason only. For the mind to accept an alleged revelation impromptu, as if there were more reverence or more submission in the act than in clinging closely to its own moral constitution, and searching all claims, is for it to lay itself open to the most deadly mistake, for none can tell whither the blind will

go. Reverence lies rather in standing fast where God first plants our feet, till we hear an unmistakable voice calling us thence. If we are ready for that voice it will not fail to return to us once, twice or three times, as to Samuel. The challenge of revelation is no more peremptory than that of reason. Our own convictions are God's first words to us, and to these we must unite all that he speaks later, or lose guidance, the clue of thought, and so lose life. No good can come to the soul, to the reason, to conscience by hastening or omitting any of the necessary steps of growth. Reason must be allowed the time requisite to give us the grounds of belief, equally when we accept what it declares, and what it alone could not declare. This is faithfulness, to hold fast to God's work in our own souls.

Nor can any rite or any preceptive obedience profit us, the reasons of which are hidden from us. Here also there is a double form of rational obedience ; one that rests on insight, and one that springs from authority, recognized as legitimate. Nor can one of these be allowed arbitrarily to overbear the other. We may obey God as God, if we are assured that the command is his, even though we do not understand the grounds of the action enjoined. Such obedience may be healthy and rational. But if the precept referred to God makes plainly against our moral reason, the whole question of its authenticity is thereby reopened. A clear decision on the one side can not put out of court a like clear decision on the other ; the two must be readjudicated. The mind must wait for reconciliation, knowing that there is a mistake somewhere, since its conclusions are contradictory. To accept the precept blindly, as if reverence lay in simple obedience, is to desert truth at one point and offer it allegiance at another. The desertion is blind, and the allegiance is

blind, and both are rationally worthless. The life constructed on such a principle is laid open to accident, and to the most blameworthy excess. We are at loss to see the first advantage accruing to truth from such a breakdown of reason, such an irrational submission to authority. There is in it the utmost danger. We know historically that sincere and insincere, sane and insane men, have in every form and in every way set up their own ideas and commands as those of God, and that God's service has so become again and again a brutish, brutal and revolting tyranny. The mind, the conscience that fail themselves can find no other safe anchorage ; they may be blown any whither. If they come to good they know not of it, if they fall into evil they suffer from it in the most fatal form. Obedience is good, but only obedience to legitimate authority ; and this legitimacy rests on comprehension, not assertion. Nor are these questions that can be settled in a general way to the oversight of particulars. The revelation as a whole and each of its parts are under inquiry.

Again, we submit the Scriptures to reason, because only thus can they accomplish their full purpose. What is that purpose ? To quicken, guide, renew, nourish the human soul. For this end they must be understood, penetrate thought and be penetrated by it, fed upon by the rootlets of reflection and emotion. The more freely they are submitted to the mind and conscience, the more faithfully they are searched, the more direct, universal and loving will be their influence. Mistakes of course will be made, but certainly no graver mistakes than are sure to accompany the opposite method, and mistakes that will be more quickly and healthily corrected, because of the free inquiry which accompanies them. It is the very purpose of the Scriptures to instruct and train men, and instruction and training call for liberty, for reason, bound

not by one or another limit, but only by those limits which it sets itself. Reason is not partly good and partly bad, right in one measure and wrong in another. Reason is always and wholly good ; it is unreason that is mischievous. Reason best rids itself of unreason, of the parasites of error, by vigorous, patient activity, by sound health. Thus is it exercised to discern good and evil. Its holiest and most invigorating life is found when directed in a searching, which is a reverent, temper toward the Word of God. God gives a pure atmosphere to the inhalation of the most unwholesome lungs, a richly colored world to short-sighted and blear-eyed vision ; and equally he gives his truth to all to use it as they can, bowing it to the weakest. In our several measures of apprehension lie our possibilities of life. It does not give more insight to suppress that we have. Man is often found in a bad case, calls for help on every side, yet he must in the end see and live by his own powers. The word of God must at length be left with him, as light and heat with the tender blade.

This freedom of handling and use, even of revelation, belongs to man, because only thus can *individual* life be maintained. The authoritative interpretation to which the reason is called to submit is the rendering of another. The church, the synod, the theologian have pronounced so and so, and therefore the individual is to distrust his own conclusion, and accept a current conviction. This accumulated force which gathers about a conventional statement, rising up to hush and subdue the individual mind, is not one which springs from individual thought, it is directly opposed to it. The faith offered first shot up in the individual soul, and then possessed its maximum power for good. From that time on, as cast and recast in the same way into the same soil, it has exhausted that soil, and made it increasingly barren. The conventional certainty, which

slowly displaces the certainty of conviction, is nothing but the decay of individuality, of life. Calvin may think freely, and reason logically for himself. Herein he adopts our principle. But when he sets up his results, or others set them up after him, as in any way limits of thought, he and they violate the very principle, the very liberty by which every good contained in his dogmas was reached, the only principle by which it can be retained. The religious life of the individual can be won and maintained on no easier grounds than this, of faithful, cogent, independent activity; and the degree of life will be the degree of this activity. Inquiry he must certainly be allowed, and shall not this inquiry be thorough and complete? Is not this to submit all questions to reason? There is here an opportunity for confused statement and confused results, but hardly for two opinions.

We may appeal to the Bible, but our appeal will wholly miscarry, if it is not accompanied with the right of interpretation, of the wisest and most comprehensive rendering; if reason is not to have its largest way in it. On any other condition, our allegiance to the Bible will be our allegiance to the exegete who has expounded it for us, the theologian who has formulated it in dogma. We may as well allow a church and a pope to crowd in between us and truth, and accept graciously the charity of their giving, as to allow a Calvin or a creed to do the same thing. Nay, the church is preferable, is the more august and historic power, the more composite and flexible force, one in some slow way capable of growth. We must ourselves inquire, or we bring our ears, sooner or later, to the door-post of a master. If we inquire, we must do it boldly, faithfully, and this is to submit revelation in authenticity, interpretation, application, to reason; is to use revelation, not to be used

by it, or by those who in one way or another set up a special ownership in it.

Such a submission is the condition of all reform. Reform is the breaking away of the individual reason from the traditional force of revelation, a breaking through the incrustations of assertion that have enclosed it. Reform, because it is reform, claims the right to judge, and sets itself to the task of judging, both as to what is revelation, and how revelation is to be understood. This is shown in the easy way in which Luther set aside a distasteful epistle. Let reform hesitate in this work, let it stop anywhere short of the end, and the adversary, recovering courage, will quickly drive it to the wall. If in the exigency the reformer dare not trust his reason, announce his grounds and stand on them, he far better tarry in the camp; he can never make a camp of his own, and is but an outcast. No one can muster as many or as respectable or as cogent authorities for a new faith as his adversaries for the old one. Reason is the only refuge of reform. If authority is in any way to be admitted, then Catholicism has an incalculable advantage, stretching broadly over every Christian century and in solid continuity through them all. It is not to the Bible, unestablished, uninterpreted, unapplied, that the reformer appeals, it is to his knowledge and use of it, and this knowledge and use stand or fall by the reason that is in them, and by nothing else.

There the reformer must be content to stand or not to stand at all; on this basis of freedom alone can we properly accept him. It is surprising with what zeal we give in our adhesion to a first reformer, and with what bitterness we reject a second, forgetful that the guarantee of the one is the guarantee of the other. We hear with enthusiasm the declaration of Paul, all things are lawful for me,

and then proceed to make the least letter of precept that has fallen from his lips, though it pertain exclusively to forms, a constraining law to us. We insist on the bonds of our slavery, and compel the champions of freedom to forge them for us, taking them with peculiar gratitude from their hands.

The highest obligation and the highest reverence are also involved in this reference of religious truth to reason. None are under the pressure of so many motives as those who accept for themselves the entire responsibility of faith and action. Every other position is one of relief and escape compared with this. There is also no such reverential use of the truth as a bold use of it. No other use implies the same confidence in it. A timid suppressing of inquiry is the mark of distrust and fear. If we deeply reverence God's Word, we shall not fear any sincere, thorough search into it, any sufficient test of its claims. Its flexibility, its growth, its enlarged adaptations will delight us. It is only narrow, fragile dogma that will not bear the bold, strong hand. If we reverence our own powers,—God's gifts, the coördinates of knowledge—if we are confident in his truth, we shall put the two in the most living interaction, secure of the results. And this is reverence by which we draw near to God instead of standing in fear afar off, ascend the mount instead of halting at its base amazed.

See also how this reverence reacts on the sense of obligation. From the moment the reason submits itself blindly to authority, its functions are at an end ; its obligations are statical not dynamical. This reverence for the truth keeps every faculty alert. No soul breathes a more vigorous, vital moral atmosphere, one more alive with liberty and responsibility, than he who seeks enlarged apprehension, praying God that he may find it.

The Word of God also increasingly, as men have been able to accept the trust, has committed itself to their inquiries. In the Old Testament authority is uppermost. Reason looks abroad before it looks to itself. It is rational that it should. Feeble, fragmentary, immature in its own judgments, it rightly desires guidance, and finds its first exercise in seeking and accepting instruction. The discipline of rites and positive precepts which characterizes the Old Testament is neither an irrational method, nor one in neglect of reason. It stands in adaptation to incipient, germinant thought, to infantile and child-like stages of growth. In the New Testament, addressed to those somewhat more mature in religious thought, who had exhausted the disciplinary power of one dispensation, the appeal to the conscience, the reason, of the individual is most direct. The great characteristic of our Saviour's instructions is a want of deference to existing authorities, the enunciation of principles which call for the most wise, patient thought, either to understand them or use them—principles that can not only be misunderstood, but are almost sure to be misunderstood, by every hasty or timid or trammelled mind. His ever returning formula of exhortation is, He that hath ears to hear let him hear. An earnest calling up of powers is the first condition of discipleship. Wisdom is justified of her children. It is impossible to justify wise ways otherwise than by wise thoughts about them. Add to this the exhortation, Search the Scriptures, with the farther assertion of Paul, The letter killeth and the spirit giveth life, and we have not merely the fullest warrant for the fullest use of our powers, that is, for bringing all things as we are able to the test of reason, but the opening effort of obedience is put in this very work. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. Try the spirits whether they are of God.

The test of faith applied to Abraham may seem in direct contradiction to the view now taken, and to imply quite another method on the part of God. The command to sacrifice Isaac was in contravention of what we now at least regard as the plainest morality, and would be fitted, therefore, no matter how clearly given, to stagger and bewilder the mind, placing it between opposite and equally enforced commands, the one resting on the law of God in the conscience, and the other on revelation. The mind would thus be distracted between reason and authority, and must needs stand still where the dilemma found it. To such a degree is this the bearing of the transaction, that we regard it morally, as it is historically, quite exceptional ; one that takes its flavor from the time and circumstances. No revelation can, in its precepts, violate the decalogue, and yet bind us to obedience.

The reasons are two. No commands of God can be more fundamental or better supported than those of the decalogue. A command in opposition to any of them could only bewilder our judgment, and strike from under us all grounds of belief. We should be in the position of one who had received from a military commander instructions that were, under no circumstances, to be departed from, and was shortly after enjoined a line of action in direct disregard of them. He would be unable to say whether the second order was intended to test his faithfulness to the first, or was designed to supersede it. Let one command be clear, explicit, without conditions, and a second command resting on a like basis can secure no authority over it. Authority as authority is as good at one point as at another ; while the moral injunction is aided in its proof by our entire experience, and the positive injunction is in a like degree obscured.

We ought not, also, to obey the second as opposed to

the first, because mere authority, no matter how well established, can not reverse moral quality, nor maintain itself as opposed to it. Our moral nature underlies positive command, not the reverse. God's commands owe their hold upon us to the response which his government meets with in our moral constitution, and can not be used, in a single instance, to subvert this only seat of authority. If God's will becomes an unrighteous will, I am bound to resist it. In all obedience I must look to the moral quality and conditions of obedience, as the forces alone which give it any merit. Thus only is virtue virtue, with a power to train and elevate, to carry one forward in an increasingly intelligent and holy service. The justice, the morality of an action are absolutely essential to the proof that it is the will of a righteous God, while its injustice forbids such proof. No principle can be safer than this.

How, then, are we to regard this command to Abraham? It was given on a lower plane of intelligence and training than the one involved in our discussion. The element of reasonable authority was in some way clearly present to the mind of Abraham, and the counter-voice of his moral nature, being very indistinct or wholly wanting, the conflict lay, not between duty and duty, but between duty and affection. So the command became a test of faith and a means of its discipline. The method was simply not controlled by considerations foreign to the case. Abraham was treated with the measure of rationality that falls to the control of a child, because he was a child. The conflict in his mind was regarded as being exactly what it was, one of reverence with inclination. The example has no authority beyond its own narrow field.

Dr. Hodge, in speaking of the relation of reason and revelation, says, "Philosophy seeks to attain knowledge by speculation and induction, or by the exercise of our intel-

lectual faculties. Theology relies upon authority, receiving as truth what God in his word has revealed.”* If this were the whole truth or the chief part of it, if reason were the binding power in nature, and authority in revelation, then would revelation enter in instant arrest of those methods of growth it found current, would put itself in conflict with the normal development of our ethical constitution in its passage from positive authority to pure morality, from the rule of others to its own rule, from darkness to light. Prior to revelation, inquiry, thought, comparison were at least partially in order, and remain in order in all lower fields of knowledge as the preparation and ground of action, but revelation being present, the mind is made submissive to the letter and blind to the spirit and scope of its injunctions. This is retreat not progress, a pressing of men backward not forward in development. Moreover, if the command is to be interpreted, if its authority is to be extended and harmonized, then reason must be called in to correlate action under it. Collisions can not be overlooked, nor contradictions left unreconciled; and this is to set up again the tribunal of reason within the precincts of authority. No matter what the revelation, or how decisive, it must find application through a truly wise, free, constructive, judicial thought. Why so anxious then to explode a reason which must instantly reappear. Reason is chastened to a holy service, not by scourging but by encouragement. Flagellations avail no more with it than with the body.

He says farther, “Men know unspeakably more than they understand.”† This is true under any view. Authority is ample to announce and to support merely the unknown; but the relation of the unknown to the known is open to the discussion of reason. If what is presented to-day as knowledge subverts the knowledge of yesterday, then must

* Systematic Theology, vol. i. p. 56. † Ibid, p. 50.

we settle opposing claims, otherwise knowledge becomes contradictory and futile. "We must make our choice between the wisdom of man and the wisdom of God."^{*} How? By accepting that as the wisdom of God which seems to us to be irrational, and rejecting that which has in it the force and light of reason as being the wisdom of men? Is it no evidence against that which is offered as divine wisdom that it is out of harmony with human thought; obscure, contradictory and unjust? Of what worth would such wisdom be that, failing to guide the mind, confuses and bewilders it? Can we really be fed spiritually on absurdities and injustice if only they are ascribed to God? Certainly we are to accept the wisdom of God as against the wisdom of men, because in this opposition the wisdom of men ceases to be wisdom. This is the reason and the sole reason of its rejection. The wisdom of God includes, gathers up the true wisdom of men, and finds its proof in that fact. We are in search of the *wisdom of God*, are we therefore to take it to be folly? The question is always pressing for an answer, What is the wisdom of God? To the sincere mind its fundamental evidence must be its power to give light. Unrighteousness and irrationality show misapprehension; righteousness and rationality, apprehension. It is calling light darkness and darkness light to assert otherwise. Reason does not exclude the acceptance of the obscure and the unknown. It can wait long on the process of interpretation and reconciliation, but it can not fail to regard harmony and rationality as criteria of truth. To do this would be to cripple all the fleet steeds of thought. Religious truth stands on no other footing than that of truth.

We offer one more reason for this direct, unreserved inquiry into revelation, testing its truths, applying its prin-

^{*} Systematic Theology, p. 59.

ciples and throwing it as new material into accord with old convictions, with such mutual modifications as are wont to spring up. Theologians, all active, thoughtful men, are doing this very thing, no matter how staunchly they may deny its rightfulness. A system of theology is never offered which does not contain to a large extent this element of human reason, which does not owe its peculiarities to it. Far better is it that each system should stand, or struggle to stand, in reason than in unreason. In what sense is one system of Christian theology Biblical as opposed to another? Only in this sense, that its authors and defenders assert it to be so, and offer that assertion to us to be passed upon. Such claims can be decided only by reason, a reason that boldly canvasses and thoroughly reviews all methods. Has it not been just such an action that has led the dogmatic theologian to settle on his own representation as correct? If it has not, do the narrowness of his inquiry, the restricted nature of his reasoning, reflect probability or improbability on his views? The thought and heart of Dr. Hodge are in his system of theology, and we get not a ray of divine light save as it filters down to us through these media. Be the interpreting conceptions opaque or transparent, clear or murky, there they are to challenge the light that enters. He who goes to this or to any teacher, must judge his assertions, or be blindly led by them. To study the Bible otherwise than through our own apprehension of truth and right is impossible, and every effort toward it is one which approaches the deadness of the letter, not the life of the spirit; that strives to give its words unmistakable meanings aside from a fresh, living rendering of them in the souls of men. Ordinary honesty, then, calls upon us to do avowedly what we all are doing, to stand each by his system, not saying This is the truth of God, this is his

word ; but, This is my apprehension of that truth, my interpretation of that word. In the degree in which this is more honest, is it also more wholesome. I fear not to be condemned before God as having too boldly, too earnestly sought the truth, as having submitted myself to it implicitly,—and there is no submission to the truth but that of reason—I only fear lest too lazily, too authoritatively, too unkindly, too obstinately, I may have uttered idle or partial or irresponsible or harsh words, and said of them, These are the words of God, by this faith we must live or die. Nay, indeed, each soul lives before God, and God helps it to live. Our sin is that we do not gently give it a cup of cold water in its weary travels, ministering in the little wherein we can minister.



CHAPTER IX.

Miracles.

THE discussion of miracles follows naturally upon revelation, since it is a distinctive feature of revelation that it involves the supernatural, and is accompanied by it as a proof of authority. Words not confirmed by miracle, nor in themselves including the supernatural, would come under the truths of natural religion, accessible to the normal action of the human mind. A revelation as a revelation, as a distinct divine declaration, must sustain itself either by the presence of an obviously supernatural insight, or be sealed under the hand of God by a miracle. Nothing which pertains to Christianity has in our time been more distasteful than miracles. Many look upon them with a repugnance which no measure of proof can over-

come. Any fact in the line of nature would be substantiated by a fraction of the evidence for miracles furnished by the New Testament. This proof fails to convince us because of a stubborn prejudgment. We need, therefore, to see what the miracle is, and what are the presumptions against it, before we can decide whether it simply calls for exceptionally clear evidence, or is wholly incapable of proof.

A miracle is an event which transcends, in some way exceeds or contravenes, the natural forces then and there present. It implies, therefore, plainly the intervention in nature of a power superior to it ; this is its moral significance. Without this to support it, it must certainly and perfectly fail. To refer the miracle to a previously unknown law of nature is, in the advocate of miracles, cowardly and weak. It is cowardly, if used as an evasion of the difficulty involved in the intervention of God ; for this intervention is the thing to be defended, the citadel of the position. It is weak, if it be thought to afford any relief to the perplexities of the question. If the approach of the strange, apparently supernatural, but really natural, event is known in the way of ordinary knowledge, to the prophet or the apostle who employs it, he immediately becomes a deceiver. Instead of sustaining the truth of his present message, he loses his own personal truthfulness. If the event is known to him by divine revelation, then the miracle is transferred from the event itself to his knowledge of it, and remains at that point a miracle, beset with the first difficulty. Miracles must be boldly asserted or boldly denied ; there is no possible compromise. Science or revelation must succumb.

The word supernatural has usually been used as equivalent to the miraculous. Bushnell has drawn attention vigorously to what he terms the supernatural element in man. He thus allies volition in its relation to nature to

the miraculous. The point he makes is one of great importance, but volition needs none the less to be distinguished from the miracle. It helps us, indeed, to understand and to accept the miracle, but is by no means equivalent to it. Were we not believers in liberty, in choice, we should have no such conception of God and of his relations to nature as would give grounds for a miracle. Volition does lay hold of the physical forces present, and use them for ends beyond themselves. There is, however, so far as we know, no force added to them by choice. Choice assigns their direction, determines their instant, their degree, of action, but gives them no new resources of vigor. The forces are there present to be expended, and are capable of expenditure in different degrees and ways. The form and measure of this possible expenditure are determined by volition, and this without the introduction of a new force, or loss of an old one. The method is inscrutable, but the fact we believe in. While volition, therefore, rises entirely above an ordinary physical event, necessary in inception and execution, it is yet clearly distinguished from a miracle. There are present to volition nervous and muscular conditions which quite hedge about its powers. Brain and muscle are a part of nature, and play perfectly under her laws. In the miracle, no such well-defined and well-understood adaptations, no known mechanisms, wait on the will of the Creator. Means disappear before the direct stroke of volition. To assume their presence is to imply facts as obscure as the miracle itself. The miracle discloses a force new among the forces present, and superior to them, while volition is strictly confined to those forces as plainly lodged in a given organization. The miracle is thus an act different in kind from choice, since it proceeds without physical means; nor is it at all restrained by those present. Miracles

must be decidedly separated from acts of volition, and whether we do well to include the latter with them under the word supernatural seems doubtful. Such a use is liable to aid in confusing the distinction just made, and thus in obscuring the general argument for miracles. Moreover, if we so employ words, we immediately sink the word nature to physical nature, physical forces, and exclude from it man's intellectual, spiritual powers. In reference to these, spontaneity, liberty are not supernatural but natural. In discussion also with necessitarians, we have a terminology which is to them jargon, since they admit of no difference in intrinsic connection, between an act of choice and a physical event. They could not go with us in our new use of words, and would be quite likely to misapprehend it, altering the notion of choice to suit the word supernatural, rather than bowing this to its new service. It seems well then to leave the supernatural and the miraculous as one class, and to claim within nature, within the lines defined by a determinate constitution, a radical division of events, one branch of which serves to anticipate and make way for divine intervention. Man intervenes in physical nature under fixed limitations exterior to his own choice. God intervenes on terms unknown and unrestrained.

We shall speak first of the objections to miracles, and afterward of their proof and relations. It is impossible, in a few quotations, adequately to express the depth of that sentiment against miracles which, gathering force for years, has now taken undisputed possession of many minds. Spinoza held miracles to be impossible, as he thought a departure from the established laws of the universe to be derogatory. We well know what an opponent they found in Hume. Strauss, in the spirit of Spinoza, says, "For God to operate against a natural

law is to operate against himself.”* In a more passionate temper he affirms, “He who wants to clear the parsons out of the church must first clear miracles out of religion.”† Here is an end with its method quite distinctly defined. M. Guizot speaks of miracles as a chief difficulty of the Christian system. It was a most invincible antecedent conviction which led Renan to the explanation of miracles presented in his *Life of Christ*. This unbelief accompanies in Renan a strong faith-element, and earnest inquiry. Says he, “Far from leading to denial, the philosophical history of religion leads to belief by showing humanity’s constant faith in a heavenly principle and a supreme order—not to the belief which, by gross symbols, materializes its object, but to that which requires no assent to the supernatural in order to seize the ideal; to that which, to borrow the thought of St. Augustine, sees divinity better in the immutable order of things than in deviation from the eternal order.”‡ The strength of Renan’s aversion is brought out in the following passage: “Criticism has two modes of attacking a marvellous narrative; for, as to accepting it as it stands, it can not think of it; since *its essence is denial of the supernatural*.”§

The miracle is here looked on as obviously, undeniably antagonistic to reason. The ease with which he would allow an *a priori* emotion to dispose of alleged miraculous facts is shown in the assertion, “If, before this theory can be rejected, it were necessary to arrive at a rational opinion on so many really diverse facts, few men would have the right to disbelieve in the supernatural.”¶ The supernatural thus at once disproves itself, no matter with what historic facts and divine truths it may be united. “In

* History of Rationalism, Hurst, p. 277.

† Ibid, p. 276.

‡ Religious History and Criticism, p. 52.

§ Ibid, p. 17.

¶ Ibid, p. 227.

truth, in this path, it is the first step only which costs ; there is no use in haggling over the supernatural."* To accept any miracle is such a denial of reason that we may after that give easy place to anything.

The Essays and Reviews show how far the same feeling, has penetrated among men, by affiliation of belief adverse to it. "From the nature of our antecedent convictions the probability of *some* kind of mistake or deception somewhere though we know not *where*, is greater than the probability of the event really happening *in the way* and from the *causes* assigned." †

This is an opinion wholly at one with that of Hume. "If miracles were, in the estimate of a former age, among the chief *supports* of Christianity, they are at present among the main *difficulties* and hindrances to its acceptance." ‡

Says Arnold, in his work on Literature and Dogma, "It is almost impossible to exaggerate the proneness of the human mind to take miracles as evidence ; or the extent to which religion, and religion of a true and admirable kind, has been, and still is, held in connection with a reliance on miracles. . . . And yet the human mind is assuredly passing away, however slowly, from this hold of reliance also ; and those who make it their stay will more and more find it fail them, will be more and more disturbed, shaken, distressed and bewildered. For it is what is called the *Time-Spirit* that is sapping the proof from miracles—it is the *Zeit-Geist* itself. Whether we attack them or whether we defend them does not much matter ; the human mind, as its experience widens, is turning away from them." §

This aversion to miracles, for it is quite other and much more than a cold conviction, is seen, from these quotations,

* Religious History and Criticism, 312.

† p. 120.

‡ Ibid, p. 158.

§ p. 125.

to have penetrated into philosophy, theology, criticism, literature; to be making its way in every direction of earnest inquiry. Still more does it belong to science. It is the pressure of scientific thought which leads writers, like the Duke of Argyle, to make what we must regard as the very futile effort to include and cover the supernatural with the natural, and to save the distinctive features of a personal divine government under the reign of natural law. The supernatural and the natural can not coalesce in one fact. One of the writers of the *Essays and Reviews* regards the scientific spirit as an essential requisite for the discussion of miracles; doubtless it is for the destruction of miracles. "It is for the most part hazardous ground for any general moral reasoner to take to discuss subjects of evidence which essentially involve that higher application of *physical truth* which can be attained only from accurate and comprehensive acquaintance with the connected series of the physical and mathematical sciences."* Is it not still more hazardous to handle these questions with no penetrative hold on philosophy, or on the distinctive features of religious action? To such an extent has this unbelief in miracles become an axiom with scientists, that the youngest writer on these topics has his ready fling, as occasion answers, at the obnoxious faith, "He flies at once to that refuge of inconsequent and timid minds—*miracles*."†

We by no means fail to feel the vast pressure of earnest and sincere and sound thought which lies back of this rejection of miracles. We recognize the weight and volume of these obtruding glacier columns of cold unbelief that come creeping down upon us in these sunless periods

* P. 151.

† Popular Science Monthly, No. 18, p. 700.

of our spiritual life. Nor is the power of the Time-spirit hidden from us ; yet we should fear it more thoroughly did we not know whose loins have travailed with it, how it came to its birth. We should be more apprehensive from the prevalent unbelief could we not assign the reasons of its growth, reasons which by no means justify it, but rather disclose it as an extreme point in the arc of oscillation. We can still lay, or think we can, the foundations of a philosophy in which the Time-spirit plays no such part, has no such power of upheaval, as that conceded it. We should not venture to rest the argument for miracles on the purely historic proof. Strong as this is, it needs the support of a fitness in the nature of the world, a fitness in the human and divine nature, for the presence of the miracle. Without this fitness, without an intellectual constitution which calls for intervention, without a philosophy in sympathy with it, we should yield this conflict. It is too late in the correlation of forces easily to accept anything new in principle. The difficulty does not lie in the weakness of the historic proof, but in the fact that no proof of this kind can stand successfully against the permanent drift of science and philosophy. Outstanding points must give way to fixed currents. There is such a thing as massiveness, weight, in intellectual as in physical movement, in evidence as in force.

These objections to miracles have grounds ; they rest back on principles that have been working their way rapidly into human thought for the last three centuries. The chief root of unbelief penetrates far back into the Lockian Philosophy of experience. If all knowledge is empirical, then the miracle is doomed, and with it the being of God, and the government of God, farther than these are contained in and expressed by nature. What Morell says in his *Philosophy of Religion* is indubitable. If we are to

deal with the supernatural, "we must appeal to some standard higher than that which results from mere inductive procedure, and employ a method of research very different from the Baconian Organum."*

We believe a false, a partial, a superficial philosophy to be responsible for the prevalent sentiment against miracles. It is, therefore, only one vibration in human thought, correcting much, modifying much, yielding much, but one which, having done its work, can not itself remain. The empirical philosophy, the cosmic philosophy, must in each and all of its phases be found in settled antagonism to spiritual truth. We can not here refute it, we have striven to do it elsewhere; we only point out its precise bearings on the question before us. It makes no provision for liberty, it can make none. Liberty must take rank among unverified notions, since it is not a product of experience, but an idea we bring to the interpretation of experience. An empirical philosophy can do nothing with the rational and rationalizing elements of thought; it can only busy itself with inductions, with arranging the facts of sensation. Its inquiries—if within the scope of its own principles—begin and end all of them in the dust-heap; and the principles, the ideas by which it there introduces order are filchings which it hides from itself. It steals the notion of cause and effect, and rejects that of liberty lying side by side with it in the human mind. But without liberty—a thing not so much as suggested either in the regular on-going or the by-play of matter—there is no opportunity for a personal God, and no opportunity for miracles. Miracles are necessarily and absolutely excluded, since the principle of causation, pronounced universal, can not recognize them. Those who build consciously or unconsciously on such a philosophy must say, "A great Per-

* P. 379.

sonal First Cause, the moral and intelligent Governor of the universe, can never be verified.”*

If we go down and back with our philosophy, and cut the roots of thought, we must expect the topmost branches to wither ; we are not, therefore, at liberty to affirm, There is no fitness in them ; the plant is changing its habit. Miracles are dependent on God, and God, as a personal being, calls for the conception of liberty, and liberty is a transcendental truth of reason, a product of insight. We have loosened foundation stones of thought in denying the rational intuitions, and slowly, as the want of support is felt, the superstructure crumbles. Let us understand this fact, and refer it to our own folly, not to the Time-spirit. There are many Anti-Christes, many false Time-spirits ; that alone is the true Time-spirit which is the truth.

Observe how much is swept away with this unverified idea of a personal God. We have trouble with personality in God because we have trouble with personality in ourselves, are perplexed by its constituents, have subjected its elements to analysis side by side with those of matter, and have rejected every non-conformable feature. Hence we have lost not God only as an object of belief, but man as well. Says Arnold,—striving to hold on to religion though he has set aside the personality of God as unverifiable—“When we are asked, What is the object of religion? let us reply, *Conduct*. And when we are asked farther, What is conduct? let us answer, Three-fourths of life.”† Very well, but what is conduct without liberty? It is so impossible for us, even in thought, for an instant, to eliminate the free, personal element in character, that having denied it in theory, we go straight forward to construct conduct, character, society as if we had said nothing on the subject. But without liberty conduct is an unmanageable series of physical events,

* Literature and Dogma, p. 9.

† Ibid, p. 44.

a necessary sequence with no more significance than the physical series which under one and the same law are progressing side by side with it. The notions of potency, opportunity, responsibility are ambient images, shadows that cling strangely enough to the facts, a glorified mist that envelops them, but have no more to do with their character and control than the clouds lingering on mountain summits have to do with the rocks beneath them. The Time-spirit, standing for the merely logical coherence of necessary truth, *will* have to do with each of these conceptions in their order, will disperse them one after another as lacking verifiable being. What then will become of conduct? Having lost the one-fourth part of foundation truth, it, the three-fourths part of superstructure, will disappear.

Suppose with Arnold we call that law in things about us, in the "not-ourselves," by which they tend to establish and maintain order, God, what have we gained? The word has not enlarged the fact; we still have laws, tendencies, nothing more; and therein the basis of prudence, not of religion. We accept his statement of the transformation of morality into religion as arising by the addition of emotions.

"The true meaning of religion is thus not simply *morality*, but *morality touched by emotion*. And this new elevation and inspiration of morality is well marked by the word 'righteousness.' Conduct is the word of common life, morality is the word of philosophical designation, righteousness is the word of religion."*

But this transition from philosophy to religion without new ideas as the grounds of the emotion which is to characterize it, is impossible. No such ideas are given by Arnold, nay, they are denied rather. Law and order,

* Literature and Dogma, p. 46.

firmly fastened in the "*not-ourselves*," are the basis of philosophy, not of religion, of thought rather than emotion. These yield what Arnold terms morality, a cold morality, which has no more warmth than the frigid conceptions from which it springs. Here is no opportunity for righteousness, a sympathetic love of duty, but only for obedience, a conformity to conditions, a classification of actions, paths, as safe or unsafe, and a patient, often a weary, traveling in the best of them. There is no profit in calling a tendency, God, unless we mean to hoodwink the reason, and introduce by a subtle personification ideas we have just rejected. It seems to us scarcely less than this to do as Arnold proceeds to do. "The indication on this moral side of that tendency, not of our making, by which things fulfill the law of their being, we do very much mean to denote, and to sum up, when we speak of the will of God, pleasing God, serving God."* This is to resolve religion, and that too under the plea of giving it a basis that can be verified, into a poetic illusion. The new warmth is only a figure of speech, the fanciful words of eager sympathy that we have applied to the inflexible, dead fact of law. We call the old new, the aged young, and then spring toward the image of our fancy with fresh passion. Whatever the cultivated may make of such abstractions as the "*not-ourselves*," the most difficult of all abstractions for the mind to grasp and steady itself by,—an abstraction giving to the emotions a footing not a particle better than that of "*the ego and the non-ego*," or the personal and the impersonal, which comes to Arnold and to others with the taint of metaphysics—it is quite certain that the uncultivated will either make nothing at all of them, or transfer to them personal quality in some strangely crass, crude way. The patriarch and the

* Literature and Dogma, p. 63.

prophet fed upon no such flashy food, nor will their seed to the end of time.

Here enters the charge that religion is ever anthropomorphic, supported by the often used words of Goethe, 'Man never knows how anthropomorphic he is.' Quite true, human reasoning will always be human reasoning, human ideas human ideas, but how much merit are we to attach to the discovery? The only question is, Whether we shall to best advantage look toward God through the medium of our own nature, or the still more restricted and opaque medium of the physical world? Whether we shall approach God with the best we have, or with inferior ascriptions, or not at all? A telescope of small power may disclose a star, one of greater power may yield a disk, but both leave the secrets of its being unexplored. Are we, therefore, to despise them, or to distrust the facts which they do give? Because the evidence they offer is not good beyond their limits, are we to reject it within those limits? Personality, the nature of man as a means of interpretation, assigns to God personality. This is our instrument of highest power, this our best conception. We feel, then, both wise and safe in using it, even though it should yield only a flickering stream of light, or a disk barely discernible. Certainly if such a disk is disclosed, we are far enough off from the inference that its apparent dimensions are its actual size.

We can not be denied, in dealing with the deep questions of being, the syllabus which our own spiritual constitution provides us, and then be referred complacently to one every way more restricted. If God is more than man, proportionately to the difference between mind and matter, is he more than matter. The only logically sufficient way in which we can lose personality in God is to first lose it in ourselves. Our own constitution is the telescope given

us wherewith to range the spiritual heavens. We might as well complain of the instruments of our observatories, that they give inadequate dimensions, telescopic magnitudes, not real ones, as of the ideas of the human mind, that they do not go beyond themselves; that they leave much undisclosed in the objects they present. This is not allowing that all knowledge is relative, and so confused within its own bounds by an unknown personal equation; it is accepting the obvious fact that the knowledge of the infinite is not complete. The unknown does not react on the known so as to destroy it. If this were true, there could be no knowledge but complete knowledge. There is not the least proof that in an axiom, an intuition, there is a formal, personal, organic element vitiating the conclusion.

The unverifiable element in religion—unverifiable in a low, sensational way—is faith. I have confidence in a friend, my neighbor does not share it. His distrust may be invincible by the proof that I offer, for there is in that proof an emotional coloring, which exists for me and not for him. A belief in God's personal being and government involves a faith-element, a personal element, it carries an emotional force which is present to one and not to another. Yet when present it is a truly rational ground both of belief and action. Thus the confidence which unites friend to friend, which holds men together in society, is a valid force, sufficient for the great work it performs, a sound basis for the conclusions it gives rise to. Faith, a tendency to repose on virtue and personal power, a ready submission to the indications of integrity, enters largely into our belief in God. The intuitive philosophy is one of enlarged belief in spiritual powers. It lays emphasis on emotional phases, the sense of obligation, the sense of beauty, the manifold spiritual affections;

and works them in as the rational warmth of its primitive intuitions in their diverse bearings. It easily accepts liberty, and finds no inclination to let it down to the standard of physical causation. It expands human powers, and is struck by their broad, their ethereal working, by the subtile connections they give rise to, and the coherence, the force of proof, that is to be found in the feelings which spring up and linger along the lines of thought, disclosing, like the mists that hover along the streams, their presence and direction. Such a philosophy, with large faith in it, large belief in the human soul, in personal power, passes from its highest point of earthly apprehension over to God, and bears with it a still larger trust, a deeper repose in personal quality. It gathers an invincible faith that the best thing shall be, that the highest thing hastens to realize itself, that to the true thing belongs a certain verification in the earnest of good it contains, in the desire, the hope, that are in it. New results of this sort spring with full birth-power out of the affections and thoughts that beget them. They may not be verifiable off this plane of reason and rational sentiment—below it they certainly are not verifiable. Yet man has a scanty manhood without them ; he is little more than a mechanism of weights and measures making estimates of physical forces. Every one of us, at times, obeys these better, these faith impulses in dealing man with man, in putting all things at risk on the impalpable support of a promise, tarrying perchance not even for this, but launching out on the stormiest sea of passion at the beck of a sentiment.

Religion offers wide discipline ; it is its business to offer the widest, and hence it does not overlook the noblest portion of our nature—that of trust, of loyalty to personal integrity and power in ourselves, in others, in God. There

is an unverified element in religion, unverified by any sufficient induction of facts,—for the kingdom is before us, not around us and behind us—but not an irrational element. So is there in all fresh, noble devotedness of man to man. Its saying, fulfilling power, its power to make good its hopes, is largely in itself. “God is here really at bottom, a deeply moved way of saying conduct or righteousness.”*

But how are we to reach that deeply moved way of uttering that word, righteousness, save as we have faith in persons, faith in God, faith in the deep, broad, high law of liberty and right, uniting in a righteousness that may rule in us and does rule above us? We may begin at the top and deny a personal God; we may begin at the bottom and deny the personality of liberty to man; it matters not; a coherent, logical movement will give but one result. We shall have, when we have finished our work, our destruction called construction, the empty word-shells of spiritual thoughts, of a higher being, into which we can again put by no device of ours any adequate, living, conquering power. Our unoccupied shells are on the beach, cast up forever. We must, therefore, whatever time-spirits may have their way, be faithful to ourselves, to our hopes, powers, potentialities. When we move forward, compassed about with personal powers which no inroads of scientific analysis have been able to scatter, no sensible tests to disprove, we have no difficulty either with the independent being of God, or with his intervention in nature under his own counsels. This is not confusion, but a higher order induced on a lower one. We have two lessons instead of one, and the second is by no means inferior to the first. The stability of science is not more to us than the flexibility of religion; the impersonal than the personal; the law of the clod beneath our feet than

* Literature and Dogma, p. 65.

the law of the intellectual life that brings it into recognition.

A second ground of distrust in miracles, referable to the empirical philosophy, is that so clearly developed by Hume. We admit the difficulty, if the philosophy is to stand; but, as we reject the philosophy, the difficulty disappears with it. If we know nothing but what experience has taught us, and if our most certain principles are the inductions of our past observations, then the miracle, when it comes, will be, amid surrounding facts, in a hopeless minority; and, as a passing ripple, can only serve to perplex and embarrass our vision, to throw the images of the objects about us into a giddy dance of indistinctness and uncertainty. The best we could do, if ourselves witnesses of the miracle, would be to wait till the anomaly had passed by, till order again prevailed, and induction, our only intellectual locomotion, was once more open to us. As spectators of the strange event, we should only be able to say, that chaos and confusion had broken loose, either in our minds, our senses, or in the external world. Why should such a philosophy disturb faith? This same philosophy of experience, flowing from the pen of this same philosopher, confesses itself wholly unable to refer any event to any cause, or to offer the slightest proof of the being of any object that has passed out of sight. In its conclusions it is equally just and conclusive, and refutes itself in them one and all by its utter inability to cover the ordinary facts of experience. The fiction of the imagination that my friend lives, when he is absent from me, subserves all the purposes of a fact, could not be increased in its power by any form of proof whatever; so may it be, so far as this philosophy is concerned, with a miracle. If our only foundation for the best conclusions of our minds is either the tendency of the imagination to repeat the images of

experience, or the certainty which an action of mind acquires by repetition, then the proof of a miracle can not be less convincing, or less sound, than that for any other event, so long as it masters the fancy, or holds possession of the thoughts. Indeed this becomes the only question in evidence. Does it maintain its hold on the mind? An inquiry into its validity otherwise than this becomes futile. This would seem true not merely under the phase of the empirical philosophy offered by Hume, but under that, as well, presented by Spencer. There is with him no proof of conviction but conviction; and on this test of validity, the assertion of one mind is as good as the denial of another; in each case the judgment declares itself as a physical fact, and as such is verified and vindicated by its mere existence.

Experience, which is another term for collated sensations and their collated lingering images, can do nothing for any invisible fact, and he whose philosophy is a cosmic philosophy, one of experience, simply rules himself out of court,—or rules the court out of the world according to the balance of power between them—in the discussion of any spiritual truth. We would have the largest charity for every phase of sincere belief and unbelief, indeed we are at a loss to understand how earnest thought should be included among the states and actions that call for charity; but one thing is unbearable, unbearable in Arnold, unbearable in an hundred others, unbearable because it is malicious and stupid, and that is the scornful setting aside any proof or any statement on an abstract question, that does not suit the writer, as metaphysical. We would like to have this word, *metaphysical*, defined. If it be false philosophy or inconclusive reasoning or word-mongering, we decline to yield to our adversaries, or to any one class, a monopoly of censure; or to accede to the implied claim of complete

and exclusive exemption. But if metaphysics be the discussion and the use of abstract conceptions, if it turns on the open defence or tacit assumption of certain powers of mind which give an ultimate basis of belief, and render the limits and grounds of truth matters of interest, then no man ever writes on a philosophical theme or in a systematizing, theoretical spirit, without declared or implied metaphysics. For one to accumulate page upon page of presentation, argumentative, systematic ; woven through and through with a philosophy, a superficial or a sufficient truth-conception, and then close each discussion with a contemptuous fling at diverse lines of thought as metaphysical, is intolerable, because it is stolidity made gritty with a sprinkling of ill-will. When we undertake to decide whether miracles can be proved, we must raise the question, What are the various kinds of proof? This question we can only answer by a sound philosophy. Such a philosophy, we believe, will allow the human reason to furnish the strongest proofs independently of experience, and to provide a rational anticipation, which, running before experience, prepares the way for things perfectly new among its events, to wit, miracles. The idea of nature alone, prior to experience, excludes the miracle ; while the ideas of God and nature make way for the miracle. In either case there is an attitude in reference to proof which vigorously excludes or readily includes it. Either doctrine has its anticipations, its *a priori* preparations.

The one astonishing thing about the argument of Hume is, that men have so blindly striven to resist it inside the system, the ideas, on which it rests ; that they have so given way to fundamental assumptions and still drawn back from their corollaries. Most unskillfully has the defence often been made.

Second to a false philosophy as a ground of prejudice

against miracles, we adduce a true science. No thoughtful man can think of disparaging science, can feel otherwise than heartily proud of its achievements, and devoutly thankful for the powerful aid it has furnished to human progress, and to religious thought. Science is an auxiliary scarcely second to any that, in the passage of time, have united themselves to the on-going forces that are to conquer for man his physical, intellectual and spiritual domain. We may also well remember that the destructive, skeptical spirit of science, to be deprecated in some of its manifestations, is yet one of its best gifts, and has accomplished a work essential to the next steps of progress. Revolution must come, and its evils may be more fairly attributed to the rigid tyranny, the inflexible error, that necessitate it, than to the progressive forces it involves. Free thought, large, bold inquiry, owe much, very much, of their present power to science; and no province of action is ultimately to profit by them more completely than religion. The best sheaves will be harvested home at this point. There were evils, evils in theory, in method, in spirit, in practice, pertaining to faith, which the scientific temper and that alone could correct; and we may well rejoice in the higher estimate of nature, the more reverent study of its laws, the more sober and wise effort to unite ourselves to it by obedience which now prevail.

These facts, nevertheless, do not hide other facts, the facts that physical science covers but half the field of thought; that its laws, its regulative ideas, are largely confined to itself; that they can not be carried over to human action without working great, irreparable mischief; that science started in a reactionary way, and has pursued a reactionary orbit, and that philosophy and science, instead of mutually quickening and restraining each other as sup-

plementary branches, have fallen into antagonism, have done each other what mischief they were able, have forced extreme positions, and vented a scorn quite alien to their true interests and true spirit.

The idea of law, fixed, natural law, so fundamental in thought and controlling in action, has fallen to science. Rightly has science pushed it into the foreground, for it is the beginning and the end of its method, its axiom at one point and its conclusion at another, that with which it starts and into which, with enlarged application, it is ever returning. Vigorously has science driven back with it the easy beliefs, the verbal explanations, the credulities and the superstitions of life and religion, and put man afresh to the labor of inquiry and to a rational shaping of conduct and character under it. Captivated by its successes, it is not strange that science has mistaken a half for the whole, and striven to conquer for itself the fallow field of philosophy and of religion, in which it has seen so much to be cast out, so much to be included. When, however, it has struggled to carry the inflexible idea of physical law into the soul of man, into society, into religion, its benign mission has ceased, and it has wrought quite in the teeth of its own constructive method, that of induction. As the scholastic philosophy was compelled to give way to a new organum because it carried its admirably constructed logic entirely beyond its true province, and thought to reach exact results by manipulating the slippery, inadequate signs of things, rather than by inquiring into the things themselves; so in turn does this very method of induction make itself obnoxious by carrying over to mind, with the momentum it has acquired in physical investigations, its own idea of causation, and by subjecting to it these new phenomena, restive as they are under an alien law. Science thus forgets to bring to philosophy the truly scientific

method, and to ground the laws and principles of mind on a patient, unprejudiced inquiry into the facts of mind, under their due forms. By this means science has given rise to the deepest, most stubborn conviction against miracles. It knows nothing of liberty, and can make nothing of it; it never finds it in its own physical field, and so assures itself that it does well not to believe in it. But miracles are the concomitants of free personal power, and must disappear with it. Thus they give ground, wherever the purely scientific spirit prevails. In such esteem is this spirit held, that this last confession would be thought sufficient by many to close the question against miracles. Science is made equivalent to all exact knowledge, and so is set to open and close the doors of the kingdom of reason; whom it bids enter may enter, whom it rejects are rejected. There is one only remedy, philosophy, the peer of physical science.

A third occasion for predilections adverse to miracles is found in certain conceptions of the character of God. These conceptions are those which arise indirectly under the influence of the philosophy and the science now criticised. Where a restriction of faith is not directly referable to an undue extension of science, or to a superficial philosophy, it is indirectly referable to tendencies which these have established and maintained. Some are quick to say, It is unworthy of Infinite Wisdom to intervene to correct his work, to help it forward by after-thoughts to its goal. The miracle thus betrays weakness, not strength; failure, not success. Undoubtedly if a wise being sets himself to the task of reaching physical ends by a series of physical adaptations, then later intervention implies a want of adequate power. But the statement does not cover the case before us. For a spiritual being to propose spiritual ends of discipline, and to fit his action to the weak-

ness and cravings of those under training, are as certainly within the scope of his wisdom as any steadfast, physical work whatever. It is the feebleness of the faith of man, not the want of strength in God, that leads to the miracle. Intervention as intervention is what the human heart craves, and this is what the miracle grants it. It is a concession of grace, an accommodation to the yearnings of a finite, spiritual nature, a help to that nature as it strives to fasten itself on its true object.

Moreover, is it not a more fitting conception of an Omnipresent Being, that his work is a perpetual unfolding ; that it momentarily receives law from *his* life, strength from *his* power, than that such a Being casts off creation at one set time as a burden upon secondary, physical forces, and is so rid of it? Was God closer to his work at the beginning than he is now? Is it less flexible in his hand to-day than then? Is a new relation to it imposed upon him by the progress of time? What God may do and contemplate at one time he may contemplate and do at another. Hence if it was fitting for him at the beginning to arrange events in reference to a disclosure of himself, it is also fitting that he should now do the same thing. But a disclosure now made is a miracle. God in his own nature is not so conditioned to time that he must work once for all ; if such a condition is made out, it must be made out from the wants of man, and these look in quite the opposite direction. A pervasive presence of God, which expresses itself in the universe of to-day, its immediate activities and thoughts, is as consonant with divine attributes as any conception open to us. Certainly the opposite one, which relegates God to the beginning, wheresoever that is, is not obligatory. But without it, the present objection to miracles fails.

Yet another moral ground and better ground of objec-

tion to the supernatural is found in the mischief which this element, so readily accepted, has wrought among men. Superstition, deadening to the intellect and the heart alike, leading to fearful perversions of action ; indolence, arrogance and cruelty united by a fiction of fellowship with providence, a complicity with the ruling spiritual powers ; ill-grounded hopes, bigotry, persecution, the entire brood of passions incident to a favoritism established with Heaven and crowned with miracle, go far to justify a settled aversion to the supernatural. Religion has usually become pestiferous, mischievous, cruel according to the freedom with which it has involved the miraculous. The fetich, the charm, sorcery, witchcraft, spiritual influence, all show how easily the unknown, becomes the malign, agent. Christianity is still infested at many points with the supernatural. Conversion is a miracle, sanctification a series of miracles rather than a well ordered life, progress in society waits inscrutably on the will of God, the kingdom of God turns on the putting forth of his strength, not ours, and men are gathered into it by an electing purpose acting more or less in oversight of character and conduct. These statements are not merely made on the emotional side of belief, where they have a certain truth, but on the intellectual, logical side, where they breed hate, torpor and assumption, according to one's supposed relation to the miraculous agent. Emotionally we have no occasion to distinguish cautiously between our own willing and God's willing in us ; intellectually we have most urgent occasion, and to crowd back the miracle to its own narrow bounds of service. Beyond these it enervates the mind, makes it remiss, bigoted, and irresponsible to God at the very points at which his work has been cast upon us ; and this all under the appearance of reverence. Men have been so much disposed to shift the entire labor

of the world back on God, on special providences, special interventions, special periods, by means of the presence of a spiritual power that sets at naught natural law in its relation to the human mind, that many conceive a strong dislike for the miraculous, the revealed, as throughout disorderly, subversive, enervating. Lord Herbert, the father of English deism, had much of this feeling. We admit the justice of the sentiment ; we only draw back from its sweeping application. The supernatural is capable of most easy, and has suffered most constant, perversion ; yet it remains at times most remedial.

A single other occasion—though the philosophical, scientific, moral and historical objections unite so strongly to sustain each other as greatly to augment their force—of distrust in miracles arises from the insufficient proof which supports most of them. Such a presentation as that by Lecky leads the thoughtful mind to draw back, and to desire to disentangle itself from the entire web of credulity and deception, of absurd and foolish assertion and proof, that perplexes the subject of miracles, with a sweeping and full denial of them all.

Let the tendency of the human mind to ready belief in the supernatural, nay its insatiable craving for it, be clearly put ; let a few of the ten thousand instances in which this belief has sprung up, adding prodigy to prodigy, and all for low, stupid, vicious ends, be adduced ; let the approach to the miracles of the New Testament be made by a circuitous path, each step marked by wonders, wonders that have wasted the faith of men and debased their lives, wonders all the worse in their results because they could not be pronounced at once lying wonders, and before we reach the end of our journey in the great works of our Lord, we may lose the power to appreciate even these, and to bear back their mild light through all the dismal

way of intellectual error and spiritual blight that has led up to them, and, alas, leads down from them.

“The human mind, as its experience widens, is turning away from them—miracles. And for this reason ; it sees as its experience widens, how they arise. It sees that under certain circumstances, they always do arise ; and that they have not more solidity in one case than another. Under certain circumstances, wherever men are found, there is, as Shakespeare says :

No natural exhalation in the sky,
No scope of nature, no distempered day,
No common wind, no customed event,
But they will pluck away his natural cause,
And call them meteors, prodigies and signs,
Abortives, presages, and tongues of heaven.”*

The truth of these statements, and of many more like ones, none can deny ; and they call out in some minds a strong predisposition against the supernatural everywhere. Spencer has very carefully put this accumulative argument against the supernatural, arising, first from the class of persons with whom the belief is prevalent, and, second, from its sure restriction and slow displacement by the growth of science. The unfavorable presumption is found in the nature of the facts themselves, and also in their relation to the progress of knowledge. By both are we strongly predisposed against the average miracle.

We are prepared to present certain counter-probabilities which are overlooked by this objection to miracles, and which materially reduce its force ; and then to accept a certain remainder of well grounded sentiment which should render us strongly averse to miracles, and disposed to demand for them occasions and proofs quite peculiar. A miracle, like a revelation, is not an every day affair.

* Literature and Dogma, p. 126.

The argument against miracles arising from their mischievous character, the avidity of man for them, and their very inadequate proof, is one whose value must be estimated on the supposition of a personal, moral Ruler of the world. If God is not, or is not a personal Being, then there are grounds to be taken against miracles far stronger than these, so much stronger that considerations of this degree of weight need not be brought forward. If the miracle is impossible, it does not remain in order to argue against it as improbable. If we are to estimate this improbability, we must do it under the condition of a divine government, which at least renders miracles possible.

There is, under this condition of a gracious Ruler, a strong presumption in favor of the supernatural to be drawn from the prevalent faith in it. Blind as this faith often is, it discloses an irrepressible religious nature in man, a constant consciousness of his own personal spiritual quality, and an instinctive tendency to understand the visible world about him and the invisible world above him in part, at least, under the type of his own powers. That so universal, so deep-seated a tendency, one so rooted in human nature, should have no remainder of truth in it, should include no constitutional power of which it is the perverted growth, is difficult to believe; under a reference of our constitution to a Divine Power, exceedingly difficult to believe. Arnold goes on instantly to say, while pressing the proof above given, "Signs and wonders men's minds will have, and they create them honestly and naturally." Yes, and these things prove a movement toward the spiritual, the invisible, the supernatural, normal to the human mind, and one, therefore, which stands correlated with a discipline, a counterpart of facts, which sustain and justify it. A persistent power shows something in the environment to call it forth. A vine may

have grown prostrate for years in the meadow, may have wound itself about and tangled itself with the grass to no purpose of support, yet there remain in its nature, its hugging stalk and grasping tendrils, indications of a higher destiny, traces of another correlation. At least, in reference to our yearning, erring spiritual nature, so say our faith in God, and our belief in the coherence of his plans. Moreover, these miracles, false as ninety-nine-hundredths of them may be, and mischievous as from one point of view they may appear and are, have not, on the whole, been unserviceable, considering the state of society to which they have pertained. Better thus than worse. We ascribe to man the rudiments of a glorious spiritual nature, and look upon these manifestations as among the means by which it has been kept alive, and slowly pushed forward to its true development, the realization of its magnificent purpose. A spiritual mistake, a miscarriage in direction, a false miracle, are no more out of keeping with the present state of things, than a false theory, a mistaken fact, a misleading method in science. The intellect we may say, thrives on error, or at least thrives in spite of it; so can the spiritual affections, in the same qualified sense, thrive on falsehood, provided that falsehood is not absolute, lies in the way to truth, has such an affinity with it as to lead to it. The spirit no more than the mind suffers from delay, from effort often baffled and as often renewed. The wholly inexplicable thing in God's government would be a delusion, a lie of this kind, with no germ of truth in it; an error pointing nowhere, and fruitful only of mischief. Does the human constitution embrace such tendencies, then man's powers, and that portion of them we are wont to think the highest, are not merely perverted and misapplied, but they are wholly and forever false. Extirpation not development becomes their

true law. Not till our swarming, bewildered thoughts are hived, are they of any worth. The quicker they leave the ærial region and settle down on facts the better.

The spiritual history of the race for good and for evil, the great truths of its religious life, have all been evolved under this belief in the supernatural, under the perturbations and struggles it has brought to the human heart. The personal government of God certainly stands on quite another moral basis, if we regard this faith in the invisible, with all its errors and extravagances, as a normal, healthy element in the human soul, addressed from time to time by real manifestations, often coming to good when it seems farthest off from it, displacing death even when it can not confer life, than if we look upon it from beginning to end as a lie, a delusion, to be cut loose and cast out with such mutilations and losses as may befall the soul. A blow is struck by such a supposition at all faith in our constitution, and in the methods of God, from which we can not easily rally. There is for us a presumption, an overpowering presumption, for true miracles to be found somewhere, drawn from this quickness, this universality, this blindness of belief among men concerning them.

The presumption against miracles which arises from a false philosophy and a partial science, we must relegate to philosophy, and so pass at this point. If admitted at all, this presumption is of so absolute a character as to pre-judge the question, and render all critical estimates of the evidence for or against the miraculous narrative, impossible. No matter what the proof, the presumption is stronger than it, being, as it were, the summation of all other proof. The first principles of reason are already involved against miracles. For Renan, with his convictions, to discuss the miracles of our Lord, was simply an exercise of ingenuity. The result was not an argument

but a feat of exposition. Nothing depended on his success but his reputation for skill, his ability to do the task he had assigned himself. The facts are natural, how can the appearances be harmonized with this indubitable truth? This was the question he asked himself. This sort of presumption can be met, not by defending any given miracle, but only by overthrowing the philosophy on which it rests.

Presumptions that do not strike so deep as to foreclose the question we may meet by counter-presumptions, and by historical proof. It is only to these milder objections that we now address ourselves. We make two admissions in presenting the positive considerations in favor of miracles; first, that a steady presumption against miracles rightly accompanies historical and biblical criticism, a presumption with greater or less weight according to the character of the truths and the transactions that are dealt with, that is to say, a presumption always strong enough to force from us a sufficient reason. There is a general presumption in favor of a revelation, and in favor of its miraculous proof, but in the case of each declaration and event offered as meeting these conditions, there are uncertainty and difficulty, a special presumption calling for rigorous proof. The divine must disclose itself, always does disclose itself, under conditions of obscurity and doubt, and it must, therefore, reveal itself with a decision and brilliancy sufficient to disperse them. The historical critic may well have a mind, then, predisposed to the natural, averse to accept the supernatural, save on the most fitting occasions, and under the most adequate evidence. Neither do we feel that because we admit the supernatural once, judgment has been hoodwinked, and we are henceforth to put no restraint upon the miraculous. This is the language of one who regards each miracle and all miracles as

irrational. For us there is no defeat of reason in the first miracle, and hence reason may go forward unabashed to question the second and the third to the end of the chapter.

A second concession is, that the supernatural should be left to its own freedom as to times; places, parties; and all alike be held to one principle, to wit, sufficient occasion and satisfactory proof. There should be no antecedent decision in favor of the miracles of one time or dispensation or church as against those of another. Neither the Christian faith nor the early periods are to be conceded a presumption which puts them on a peculiar footing. The purpose of the miracle is, or at least may be, too broad for this; and if we admit it at all, we should admit it on principles broad enough to apply anywhere. Great truths, spiritual movements, regenerative forces, rational conditions, sober proofs, these are the grounds on which and on which alone the miracle can be sustained. The feeling that excludes all intervention at one point, and admits it freely at another, smacks too strongly of partiality and assumption, of sectarian sentiment, not to reflect an additional distrust on the entire topic. History must be left freely to make and define and confirm the conditions of the miracle. It is not a thing of private interpretation, a mine as opposed to thine.

Under these conditions we believe the miracle to be most useful in the spiritual kingdom, and integral with it. The miracle, as we have seen, rests back for support on the personal being of God; without this prior doctrine there is no opportunity for it. Personality yields the light which makes the miracle rational, and the miracle in turn brings the strongest confirmation to the personal element in our faith, is this element flashing up in brilliant activity. Religion, emotional, sympathetic, turns on the

Divine Fatherhood, and the core of this parental character is counsel, guidance, revelation. Certainly no sacrifice can be too great in confirming this conviction in the human soul. Nature, as a formal necessity only, can not be allowed to stand for an instant between God and the objects of his affection—to hide him from them. It is to a few a mystery why God reveals himself at all ; it is to more a mystery why he reveals himself so rarely. God once revealed, revealed in an adequate personal way, nature can resume her rule as the steadfast, beneficent expression of God's method ; but till God is disclosed, nature is a cold, heartless, inflexible law. God must be seen in, through, above nature, before nature can become the medium of his wisdom. As essential as is personality to faith, to obedience, to love, to religion, so essential are the leading proofs of it given by revelation. Nature alone is too hard a problem for the fearful, distrustful, unbelieving heart and mind of man to be left alone with, and God intervenes, gently intervenes, to help him to his first solution. The very discussions which science forces upon us show how easy it is for us to miscarry at this point, and lose the first principles of religion. If the breach made upon nature by the supernatural were far greater than it is, it would not be an expenditure disproportioned to the gain of holding in arrest the hard, impersonal reign of physical law. The scientist himself discloses the constant necessity of a reiterated assertion of the supernatural, before our spiritual life is wholly overridden by the natural. The miraculous manifestations are partial, preliminary, additive ; as the thoughts of men take hold, as God is easily and freely found in all that he does, their occasions and reasons disappear.

Allied to personality is the immediateness of God's presence in nature. The whole breadth of the physical

universe can not be put as an independent, self-sufficing mechanism between God and man without so estranging the two as well nigh to destroy spiritual sympathy and spiritual life. Such a chasm as this, as broad as creation, the conceptions and emotions of man can not steadily overpass. It was needful, a need met by miracles, that God's presence in nature, his work by it and over it, should be laid open ; that the habit of thought which personifies nature, or builds it up in independent completeness, should be broken down, and give way before the omnipresence of the one only creative hand and heart. The miracle discloses this immediateness of God, the inflexible law becomes flexible, the flow of physical forces is arrested, and returns to its bed only when the Lord's host has passed by. A wholly new face is put upon the external world, and it becomes what, to the eye of faith, it should be, but can scarcely be, without some signal of the divine presence, the tabernacle of our God. The miracle to reach this end must be the true miracle, the real presence, not the deceptive appearance recognized under that name by Robertson. "A miracle is commonly defined to be a contravention of the laws of nature. More properly speaking, it is only a higher operation of those same laws, in a form hitherto unseen. A miracle is perhaps no more a suspension or contradiction of the laws of nature than a hurricane or a thunder-storm."* We do not invoke the miracle simply to affix a new seal to nature's immutable rule, but to qualify the one science has already placed upon it. We wish no fresh illusion but a fact above facts.

The miracle is present to bring confirmation of hopes, spiritual convictions, and help our staggering faith as it sways under the burden of unbelief, internal and external.

* Robertson's Sermons, vol. I, p. 70.

How often does the Christian mind find occasion, wearied with debate, its hold on invisible things fast slipping, thoughts and feelings sinking into mere words, an idle flow of syllables; the light and warmth of belief fading out of the intellectual sky, to fling itself unreservedly back for the rest of a day or a night on palpable, tangible things, on the life and history of our Lord? The need of revelation, of the supernatural, is one to which the world's history, the experience of spiritual warriors, testify. This large, deep want confirms the fitness of the means by which it is met. How cold is the conviction of immortality which the best of the ancients, by their own strength, were able to set up, compared with that which falls to the simplest believer who walks in faith with a historic Christ. Is it irrational that such a faith should be provided for?

Revelation has also its new truths, and the appropriate seal of these is the miracle. The confirmation it yields to the old and the new truths of religion, passing on together in historic development, constitutes the immediate occasion for the supernatural, though, as a living, spiritual influence, its office is far broader than this of simple verification. The miracle is preëminently a concession to the emotions of men, and is fitted, if rightly present, to deepen, purify, enlarge the heart. This hold of the supernatural on the feelings has been the cause of its chief perversions, yet here none the less lies its leading power. It discloses the emotional nature of God, and stirs the heart of man with strange force toward him. As emotion, pure and strong, is after all the highest manifestation of rational life, we can have but little sympathy with that notion of dignity which would deny to the Divine Nature its means of disclosure, and none with that inflexible, legal government which would fill up all the direct channels by which the life of Heaven descends upon the life of the world. We

cling fast to the miracle, not shamefacedly but devoutly, as the direct contact of Heaven and earth, of God and man; as permeated with the highest rationality, the most vigorous impulses of a purified, emboldened, aspiring, spiritual life, a life that steadily passes from the visible to the invisible, from the transient light of the miracle to the permanent light of the truth it has lighted up, from the special to the habitual presence of God.

When the purpose subserved by the miracle is felt, its part in a rational system seen, the historic proof of it is in order, and has become quite possible. The truths announced, the events, the revelation that accompany a miracle, vouch for it in much the same way that it vouches for them. The Divine Word is to be disclosed by its entire character, certainly not less by its interior power than by its signs and incidents. The whole appearance determines the divine, and for its sure recognition wisdom of mind and heart is requisite. Wisdom is justified of her children. Statements, conditions, methods may be so preposterous as at once to destroy any claims they may set up of supernatural confirmation; and truths, actions, revelations may be so weighty, earnest, immaculate as to carry over to the miracles that accompany them easy acceptance. It is discernment, wise, historical criticism, spiritual intuition, that instruct the eye of faith and reason where to search for the divine, and on what conditions to accept it. Under the cautious, yet open feeling we have striven to establish in behalf of the supernatural, a feeling that institutes for it a glad yet fearful search, it is to the strongest, most indisputable points of revelation that the eye is at once directed. The method of unbelief is reversed. The credulities, mistakes, deceptions of men are not drawn out at length; nor the light of the spiritual world referred to only when its brightness has been dimmed by the vapor, the smoke

and the darkness of a murky human atmosphere. The mind, with relative courage and hope, goes straight to the strong light of the New Testament, to the life of our Lord, and there settles the question of miracle or no miracle. It does not destroy the proof before it reaches it, but leaves to the best proof its own independent weight. Can all nebulæ be resolved into stars? In answering this inquiry what matters it that many nebulæ can be so resolved. The earnest inquirer, in spite of presumptions, still seeks for the instances which leave the point open, and when these nebulæ yield in the spectrum the lines that establish a gaseous form, he accepts the proof in the face of theory and induction alike.

The New Testament, and in the New Testament the life of our Lord, furnish the proper starting point for the historical proof of miracles. It can be settled by no amount of induction elsewhere. Such an induction can only suffice to make our scrutiny here more close. If miracles fail here they fail everywhere, if they fail everywhere else they do not necessarily fail here. All else is open country, here only is the supernatural fortified and intrenched.

The war is settled by the fortunes of war at this point. To one with a mind open to conviction, who has not foreclosed discussion by antecedent probabilities, this historic evidence must seem very strong; to us it seems quite complete. Sufficient of itself, as any historic critic will admit, to put ordinary events on the firmest basis, this proof is sustained by an internal fitness, completeness and harmony of relations and purposes, of words and actions, which offer it as a compact, self-sufficing whole. The narrative, in its events and in its truths, is organized through and through on the supernatural, and must stand with it or fall with it. There is here little or no opportu-

nity for a sifting, refining, explanatory criticism. So true is this that nearly every exegete of that school rejects all theories not his own as extreme and untenable. Separately they are feeble ; collectively they are self-destructive.

The natural and the supernatural are blended in the life and teachings of Christ in the most harmonious and vigorous way. Those who have been strenuous in rejecting the one, though they have striven long and hard to retain uninjured the other, have met with very partial success. "Never were utterances concerning conduct and righteousness—Israel's master-concern, and the master-topic of the New Testament as well as the Old—which so carried with them an air of consummate truth and likelihood as Christ's did ; and never, therefore, were any utterances so irresistibly prepossessing." *

But this proportion, soundness, wholesomeness, spiritual elevation, and germinant power, of the principles and precepts of Christ, make it impossible to detach them from the character and life of which they are the constituents. That life and character are everywhere penetrated with the supernatural in so declared and unhesitating a form, that to deny its validity is to bring against them the charge of fanaticism and deception with its most destructive force. The instructions of Christ are the character of Christ, and both are his seamless mantle ; they must be taken as wholes or left as wholes. The natural and the supernatural are here so interwoven that they can not be torn apart without the loss of both. The soberness of the one element justifies the elevation of the other, and the glory of the divine rests fittingly on the comely strength of the human.

Spiritual truths, holiness of character, powerful as they are, are to some attacks very open, under some blows are

* Literature and Dogma, p. 94.

as fragile as crystal. Integrity, insight, honesty, a sincerity that is of the intellect and the heart alike, must belong to them ; to miss these, in whole or in part, by direct charge or bare suspicion, is fatal. Who will yield the wisdom and purity and holiness of the words of Christ, and who can retain them and deny the soundness of that which so uniformly underlie them, his belief in, use of, and claim to, the supernatural ?

The success of those who, like Renan, have tested the powers of destructive, historical criticism on the Gospel narratives is not such as to lead us to expect much from a method so contradictory in its conclusions, one that sets up and plucks down with so free a hand its object of veneration. Scriptural criticism loses its prestige, its presumptions of strength slip from it, its powers collapse, when it approaches the life of our Lord to dissect out its moral import, and leave behind its spiritual force. It makes a wreck where it would find a creation. The only way in which the narrative of the New Testament can be dealt with is to refuse to pick to pieces its miracles, one by one, "as an odious and repulsive task ;" to accumulate against them in an indirect, remote way doubts, probabilities, philosophical impossibilities, till we have hidden them from our vision, and are able to pass them all by, negligent of specific difficulties and specific claims. This is the method of scientists, and in the degree in which it is less fair than that of historical criticism is it more safe and effective. We commend the earnest mind that has not settled adversely the question of miracles, on the lofty grounds of a *a priori* truth, and laid out the possibilities of a creative method by its penetration into first principles, to the life of Christ, full of the soberest truth, and the profoundest insight ; an insight that never suffers his words to become conventional and common-place, a soberness

that allows him to announce no truth not then and there proximate to the visible wants of men ; yet a life, every impulse of which springs from the supernatural, not as a dogma, a power, but as a controlling spirit, an abiding spring of thought and feeling. Nor is this fact less impressive because the natural and the supernatural, the divine and the human, are left to the loving recollection of disciples to be perpetuated, and later to the evangelists to be collected and narrated as best they could. As in that life itself, so in the continuation and preservation of its influences, the same bold trust appears in the two elements of religious activity. The natural is not stultified or set aside by the supernatural ; the foundations are not shaken or removed because the superstructure is something more than an ordinary product of art. Discrepancies, omissions, miracles whose precise historic light is lost or perverted, difficulties of one kind or another, in the free, unguarded way in which they are allowed to enter, show that we have to do with great forces, negligent of formal conditions, the precision and safeguards of weakness, and developing themselves by sufficient, internal strength. The kingdom of Christ is not one of guarded statements and petty precautions, exact coincidences, assertions carefully made out and minutely followed, but of bold, strong forces, natural and supernatural, playing freely into each other, deeply planted in human history and the human heart, left to take their fortunes and conquer by native vigor. The more guarded, the more coherent, the logic, the more continuous either in truth or in action, the more petty and powerless is it likely to be, the more of a formal and the less of a substantial element. The narratives of the evangelists are as sober, as sufficient unto themselves, as is the life they present, for they are for us that life. In these mirrors alone is the character of

Christ reflected, and distortion and perversion there would have been distortion and perversion here. Sound and sober were the minds and hearts that could give a wise life so wisely, a life that may struggle a little with its medium, but one that has for the most part harmonized and subdued it. The spirit that is in them was in Christ; not otherwise can we understand its proportion and calmness. If they caught, as some are willing to believe, the supernatural as a false frenzy, a human hyperbole, from his life, and then added it thereto, how should they at the same time have kept close, evidently so close, to the fresh, earnest, searching principles he enunciated? If they suffered such intoxication from a wayward, credulous supernaturalism, how could they have given so quietly, and delineated so exactly the plain fact, and the precise truth? Christ is not one thing by reconstruction, and these narratives another; he lives for us in and by them. What they are in their essential unity and integrity, yet diversity and freedom, he is and must have been. There is for them no sufficient, constructive, harmonizing, restraining power save his life. Material distortion at one point would have subverted how quickly the proportion everywhere. The interior, spiritual rendering which John gives could not come as expansion and interpretation to narratives unlike those of the other evangelists. The fact-tendency stands to the spiritualizing tendency in the ratio of three to one, and the former sets safe limits to the latter. We can do no otherwise than hold fast to the life of Christ, true to the natural, yet built up in the strength of the supernatural, a type of the human soul with the glory of its divine elements fully disclosed. We may suffer from minor misapprehensions; the disciples may have put some limitation on this large soul, but we as they confess, Thou art the Christ, the son of God. For us to mistake at this

point would be to lose the largest light we have, and cast clear things, great things, into the shadow of things less clear and little things. The disciples, guided and guarded by these great principles, could go forward to that rich after-harvest of spiritual things, the Epistles, springing up from the same living seed ; we feel that if we can win anything, and hold anything, and live by anything, we shall do it as they did, at this point ; and shall share with them that strange transformation by which they passed from the fishermen of Galilee to the disciples of Christ. That the disciples did not put back upon Christ their own notions and their own life, but caught them from him, is seen in the Epistles, as a harmonious development under the Gospels ; is seen in the creative vigor which wrought a new life in them. Those should indicate a wilder range of supernaturalism than these, if this element is simply a reflection of the narrow, superstitious minds that caught the divine light, and cast it back over the character of Christ.

The subject of miracles is closely united with that of prayer. We might urge it as an additional confirmation of the miraculous, that prayer, as communion with God and the hope of gracious answers from him, must share its fate. The encouragements of the Word of God and the wants of men are such as to include physical events in the subjects of prayer. It would be very difficult to retain prayer as a means of reaching spiritual ends, and at the same time deny its efficiency over physical forces. We can hardly suppose that there are two methods of dealing with man, peculiar respectively to his physical and spiritual activities ; nor will it be found possible so to separate the two forms of action as to maintain over them diverse laws. The physical and the intellectual are so far in sympathy with each other, and in dependence on each other,

that one principle of intervention must apply to both. Matter has no more inherent strength and integrity than mind. The objects of prayer can not be met, if it is systematically warned back from the confines of natural law, and relegated to a region of confusion, deceptively called moral. Nor are these the representations of Scripture. We are encouraged to commit our desires to God, no matter what their range, and to anticipate a blessing in so doing. Faith is the first element of prayer; we must put a bold face upon prayer or we shall lose it altogether. Timidity and distrust are not its constituents.

Doubtless the point of change, the point which admits the sweep of new conditions, in prayer, is the mind of the petitioner, but this modification of conditions may strike out, we know not through how wide a circle of effects, spiritual and physical. God does not need to be persuaded to do good, nor is persuasion pertinent to his character. The change in the thoughts and feelings of him who offers prayer, the new attitude he thereby takes, do, however, give grounds for modified action on the part of God, and are another element to be recognized in his spiritual providence, as much as is industry in what may be termed his natural providence. It is in keeping with the wisdom and grace of God that he should modify his action in recognition of trust and love, quite as much so as that he should allow forethought and diligence to readjust physical forces. That would be a sorry spiritual universe in which cunning and quickness were rewarded, and trust and affection neglected.

Though the new conditions secured by prayer are primarily subjective, yet these changes wrought in the heart of the petitioner would themselves have no sufficient reason were not the promise present to him of an external efficiency given to prayer by the government of God. The

sincerity and good faith of the prayer presuppose the sincerity and good faith of a giver, while the fulfillment follows rationally upon the prayer as itself a spiritual condition, a new term, in the problem of discipline and rule.

With this view of the boldness and freedom of prayer, prayer that lays trustingly hold of the promise, "Ask and it shall be given you," it is absolutely essential to suppose, that answers of prayer may extend to the physical world, that the believing soul may shelter itself as freely in God as regards one class of events as another, that there is one common condition to all prayer, the power to receive, to assume the attitude under which the thing asked will be a blessing. Prayer, therefore, involves the same subordination of physical law to the will of God, as is indicated in the miracle. The only difference that holds between them is that the miracle is a manifest intervention of God, while the answer to prayer lies between God and the individual, and is, in its highest form, a hidden intervention, that appeals to faith and not to sight. The miracle is reserved for a special purpose. An event already foreclosed by natural laws is, in reference to prayer, a definite expression of the divine will, has already been put beyond the province of prayer, private desire, and included within that of miracles, which, from their own nature, respond only to a general, a cogent exigency, a high-wrought spiritual activity. The answers of prayer come to nourish private faith, private devotion ; miracles to establish public faith and open revelation. In reference to both alike, we claim that they reach beyond the laws of nature, that they are not included in her on-going. The more frankly this claim is put, the more clearly the principle in the Divine government on which prayer proceeds is stated, the more quickly will the problem involved in this relation of the spiritual to the physical, of prayer to natural law, find its

solution. Nothing is gained and much is lost by an effort to cover prayer by physical forces ; prayer, as a spiritual activity is suppressed, and obedience to fixed, external conditions takes its place. So the balance disappears between faith and action.

Says Dr. Hopkins, "A miracle is no violation of any law of nature. It presupposes laws of nature, and is simply an act performed directly by the will of God that transcends those laws. That the will of God should cause iron to rise and swim in the water is no more a violation of the law of gravitation than it is for me to raise this rod which goes up directly or indirectly by the superior force of will, acting at some point immediately upon matter. . . Such an event, so far as it is produced by an agency that is spiritual and free, is supernatural, but not miraculous. In a miracle the will of God acts directly, and produces outward effects with no intervening agency."*

"The failure on the part of Professor Tyndall to apprehend the question rightly, and still more his failure to find the distinction between the supernatural and the miraculous, sufficiently account for the difficulty he finds in connecting prayer in any way with physical results. He could not admit a miracle, he ought not . . . The universal father can change phenomena in compliance with the prayers of men and without a miracle, quite as easily as man can."†

The essential feature of a miracle is the intervention of a higher power in nature, the reaching of results not included in the *complexus* of physical forces. The mechanism of a miracle is hidden from us. We can not speak definitely of the addition of so much new force, nor of the removal or arrest or modification of so much old

* Outline Study of Man, p. 289.

† Sermon on Prayer-gauge, p. 21.

force, nor with positiveness of this as unchanged, and supplemented with will-power. A miracle is not a phenomenon to be scrutinized and scientifically stated in its constituents. One thing only is necessary to it and vouched for by it, an overbearing power before which the laws and forces of nature give ground. Whether we speak of such an intervention as a transcending of natural law, an interruption of it, or a violation of it, is immaterial; we need simply to understand that the miracle lies beyond nature in her entire sum of existing resources, it is not included in her results. In what way her forces are touched and treated in the new spiritual juncture it is not necessary for us to define, nor can we know. To express the one fact of intervention, we may use a softer or harsher word, and term it as we will an addition, a suspension, a violation.

The essential identity of an answer to prayer in the physical world and a miracle is more important. There is a formal distinction between the two in the part they play, and in the form of the manifestation; but their relation to natural law is the same. There is intervention in the one as in the other, and this is the pith of the objection to both. Nor does any distinction between the supernatural and the miraculous enable us to bring an explanation to the answer to prayer not applicable to miracles; or remove the grounds of objection to either of them as a modification of physical forces. The distinction between power of will and physical force is most important, and does prepare the way for the recognition of miracles; but it affords no complete illustration of method either in the miracle or in the answer to prayer, nor in any way distinguishes between them. Whether we shall include volition under the natural or the supernatural, as a matter of terminology merely, is not very important. Either use has its advantages; for reasons given we prefer the former.

If we include mind as well as matter in nature, we then have in nature two laws, one of necessity and one of liberty. The supernatural and the miraculous thus become one. If, however, we call volition supernatural, we then inclose in nature only physical causes, and have in the realm above nature two divisions, the supernatural and the miraculous. In this case, all action of God on nature, whether in response to prayer, or at the invocation of the prophet, is miraculous, not supernatural. The supernatural is defined by human volition, by the manner in which the will of man reaches physical forces. This is by the intervention of known, physical conditions, held in waiting for this very end. The reserved forces of nervous and muscular tissues are at man's disposal, and he acts upon nature through nature under known, uniform conditions. Thus his action, though incomprehensible in its last element, in its method of initiation, is by no means miraculous. A prayer for personal safety, is, in its answer, no more open to explanation under the conditions of volition than would be the miracle. The question in each case is, How are results not included in the ordinary progress of nature reached? If we say that volition affords a sufficient exposition, and that God's will may stand united to natural forces as does that of man, the solution would apply as well to the raising of the dead as to the arrest of disease, and applies to neither in such a way as to give any light to the method of procedure. There are no known natural means, no intervening agencies, by which the will of God is united to nature. The assumption of them is a difficulty equal to that of the miracle itself, and an action without them is wholly unallied to human volition. It is the absence of these that distinguish a miracle from an act of man, and just as much an answer to prayer. Nature is conceived as a definite make-up of forces, and that a personal will,

outside of it, should meddle with it, or be able to meddle with it, for one end or another, is the one perplexity; a perplexity that comes to the prayer of the weakest saint as much as to the strong word of Christ. In no case is the provision within nature, in both cases it is quite beyond it.

Prayer is also, like the miracle, modified by the progress of spiritual life. Prayer is thought, at the beginning, to be a constant, unobjectionable and available instrument for the working of external changes. Later it is seen to be, and to be becoming, more exclusively spiritual in its service. The excellence of nature is felt, and we ask oftenest the power to handle the conditions of our discipline wisely, and to wait patiently upon them. In other words, we come to rule the exterior by ruling the interior, finding the roots of power in our own souls. We better understand the methods of God, work more concurrently with them, and suffer them to work more uninterruptedly through us. We thus lay open our spiritual nature to the spiritual nature of God, and find nature more pliant and responsive under them both than we had thought it to be. Prayer is not thus less but more to us, even as God is more and in more than hitherto. Prayer may be, under these advanced conditions, less aggressive and importunate at a single point, but it is far more pervasive and penetrative, and meets with a larger sense of acceptance. The natural and the supernatural flow in upon each other, and we need no longer to distinguish them, or to sustain the first by the second.

In proportion, then, as the affections work with us as the highest products of our thoughts, as the spiritual overtops the physical, and the personal completes the impersonal, will miracle and prayer find easy entrance in the universe. It will not seem to us irrational that mind should

rule matter in the collective cosmos, any more than it is irrational for the intellect to rule the body in this cosmos, man; nor irrational that the affections should break in upon the cold conditions of thought, and press them into a higher service. On these conditions alone does the universe become spiritual; so only is it lifted for us to its real rank, and enclosed in its true destiny.



CHAPTER X.

Inspiration.

THERE are few dogmas which disclose to the same degree the irrationality of the dogmatic spirit as that of verbal inspiration. Its proof is null; it is a pure invention in the face of obvious facts. The advantages it sets out to gain it can not secure, for it lacks the boldness to sustain its first assertion by a second of the same nature, a divine transfer of the sacred books from scribe to scribe, from generation to generation, from speech to speech. Its first so great courage suddenly fails it before it reaches its goal. Its sole products are miserable misapprehension, unreason, and the elevation of blind hopes and servile fears to the position of religion. No doctrine could be more in contradiction of the general providence and government of God than this of final, exact, sufficient, verbal truth. None springs from a more complete misunderstanding of rational life and religious sentiment, and none, therefore, could offer itself to our faith burdened with heavier presumptions against it.

The moment, however, we pass from this position, there enter into the doctrine of inspiration great vagueness

and variety of statement. There is a strong feeling that the authority which would attach to a specific, verbal message must in some way be retained, while the obvious absurdities of the belief are avoided. An inspiration that accords with man's nature, that is nothing more than its full, honest, elevated action on spiritual topics, that reposes on the normal powers of the mind, quickened by what may also be termed the normal influences of the truth and the Divine Spirit, does not satisfy this desire for immediate, explicit, final authority in the Scriptures. Inspiration is generally held to be more than this, to be a divine impulse so strong as to rule and overrule the mind it takes possession of, and shape its thoughts to the uses of an alien personality, that of the Divine Spirit. This view may receive various statements, but they all insist more or less emphatically on a result that is authoritative.

"Christianity offers occasion for opposition by its inherent claims, independently of accidental causes. For it asserts authority over religious belief in virtue of being a supernatural communication from God, and claims the right to control human thought in virtue of possessing sacred books which are at once the record and instrument of this communication, written by men endowed with supernatural inspiration. . . . Each book is unique, a solitary miracle of its class in human history."* These are the assertions of men concerning the Scriptures, rather than the assertion of the Scriptures concerning themselves.

The presumption here, as in miracles, is against the supernatural, is for the reality and sufficiency of the natural forces present, so far as these seem adequate to the results. No notion of the need of authority can be safely allowed to overbear the *prima facie* proof of the narratives themselves. We would approach inspiration in the same

* Critical History of Free Thought ; Farrar, p. I.

spirit as that with which we approach miracles, prepared to accept any degree of it in the Scriptures which the particular facts disclose, and ready to dispense with it wholly as a supernatural agency when there is no sufficient indication of its presence. We would deal fairly with the natural and the supernatural, and that we may deal so with the natural, we must exclude the supernatural, till its presence is established. That is to say, the Scriptures prove the inspiration, not the inspiration the Scriptures. Inspiration is an interior not an exterior evidence; the power of the truth itself, not the seal attached to the paper on which it is written. Full inspiration burdens the historic proof, yet leaves the truth exactly what it was without it. The truth is no more nor less than the truth because inspired, while the assertion of inspiration calls for an especially severe scrutiny of the historic evidence. Much, therefore, which we would readily accept as a simple statement or a plain narrative, stumbles us again if urged upon us as a divine message. We lose what we already had, the greater claim sweeping away the lighter concession. Miracle and inspiration rest on a little different ground; inspiration is invoked solely to give authority to definite words, the miracle to establish character and reveal God. The one is much broader than the other. Inspiration that is a manifest breaking out and over of divine force here and there, is open to no other difficulties than those which fall to miracles, but an inspiration that is assumed merely to impart a divine authority to truths and facts apparently on a plane of human activity is a very different thing, and serves to burden our first historic proof far more than it can possibly benefit our later exposition. Truth must still, in all its highest forms, stand for itself and by itself, and work as itself in the human mind and heart.

There would seem to be no more evidence of, or occa-

sion for, a uniform, a supernatural inspiration in the Scriptures, than of a uniform, miraculous power in the detail of its historic facts. As these facts arise almost wholly under natural forces, and occupy the plane of nature, so, equally well, may the narratives that transmit them. There is no reason why the casket should be more precious than that which it contains, or why the spiritual experience of the writer should be more intense or complete than that which falls to him as prophet or apostle to utter. The words of Scripture seem to range from an ordinary apprehension of ordinary events through to the highest spiritual comprehension and prophetic insight. This diversity, real in the events themselves, should be sympathetically transferred to the narration, and so it seems to be. No fixed method, no uniform force of inspiration correspond to these diversities, or can be expressed in them. Unimportant matter can not be transformed by a trick of emphasis. We accept the Scriptures under the habitual presumptions which accompany rational action, and may well accompany religious action, that each effect is to be referred to a sufficient cause, and to one no more than sufficient. The inspiration then varies with the person, the theme, the occasion, and is often expressed by the purely normal action of the human mind. We admit fully and freely the presumption against any needless departure from natural forces, and yet unite it with a ready faith in the supernatural, when its presence is disclosed in the product. This we make its evidence. We would gladly accept every divine illumination when its light is seen by us; but to be willing to call darkness light does not seem to us the needful preparation for a revelation.

This view is not opposed to verbal inspiration merely, but to any statement of inspiration, which makes it a distinct, divine force in all parts of Scripture, one which can

enable us to say, What the writers of the Bible assert God asserts, and these assertions one and all carry with them a divine authority. The Bible rests on its historic and ethical authority, its internal authority, and not on some invisible endorsement of Heaven between the lines. Any other view dishonors it rather than honors it, constrains and overawes us in our use of it instead of leaving us to live freely by it, and so puts it and us out of that open ministration on which we stand with the other works of God.

The assertion that "inspiration extends equally to all parts of Scripture" and frees them one and all from error,* hardly seems consistent with the farther statement of Dr. Hodge, "That the nature of inspiration is to be learned from the Scriptures, from their didactic statements and from their phenomena."† The actual facts or phenomena which the Scriptures present must be put side by side with its didactic statements, and the two expounded together. In doing this, we, at least, reach quite another conclusion than that of equal inspiration. The passages in the Bible that speak directly of inspiration are comparatively few, and employ language very general in its import. They call therefore for the exposition brought to them by the obvious range in facts of the Word of God, and by the many implications of method involved therein.

There is a class of passages, represented by that found in Luke, 1st chap. 10th verse. "As he spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began." The presence of God with his servants is here affirmed, but the mode and limitations are not defined; they remain to be defined by history and by the manner in which the religious mind is wont to speak of divine control. This holiness of the prophets, of the

* Systematic Theology, vol. i, p. 163.

† Ibid, p. 153.

inspired writers, did not prevent sin, why should it be supposed to have prevented error? Moreover, the religious mind has never been careful to distinguish between the natural and supernatural, but has rather signalized its reverence by the unreserved way in which it has ascribed all its activities to God. God is said to work in us to will and to do after his own pleasure ; and this with no special inspiration as its results. Much more than this, a concessive, reverential faith has led the sacred writers to refer directly to God what has merely lain in the line of his providence. "The Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout the earth."* This bold, popular method, which allows the predominant thought, the predominant sentiment, to have its way without qualification, calls upon us, in exact analysis, to bring the assertions and the facts to which they pertain face to face, and understand the two in their mutual modifications. If Pharaoh, seeking his own ends on the level of a perverse nature, can be spoken of as pushed forward by the power of God, certainly the prophet, the servant of God, doing the will of God, may be represented as inspired of God, even though wholly at work on the plane of his own faculties.

A more definite statement is made in 2 Tim. iii. 16. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." That the word inspiration is not itself able to carry the idea of an overpowering, divine influence would seem plain, since man's physical life is referred to an inbreathing of God ; and also his understanding. "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of

* Rom. ix. 17.

life " Gen. ii. 7. "The breath of the Almighty hath given me life " Job xxxiii. 4. "The inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding " Job xxxii. 8. In these cases the in-breathed spirit issues in normal activities ; this it may do equally well in the composition of Scripture. The skill of Bezaleel as a craftsman is ascribed to the fact, "that he was filled with the spirit of God." What power, therefore, inspiration in each case carries with it must be determined by the facts, by the results reached in life, skill, wisdom. Inspiration, in reference to the Scriptures, is farther defined by the words, "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." These guiding words are far better met by a variable than by an invariable inspiration, by one interwoven with the human element than by one rising to an inflexible line constantly above it, by one that incarnates the divine in the human than by one that floods the human with the divine. Reproof, correction, instruction imply all of them intellectual growth, spiritual discipline, cling close to normal activity, accept the conditions, are not intelligible without the conditions, of freedom, inquiry and the errors incident to them. Scripture must cease to correct and instruct us, when we cease to misapprehend or to partially apprehend it.

A strong, a chief reason why men will not go directly to the Scriptures, their many-colored facts of variable value, their great variety of instruction, for an interpretation of what is to be understood by inspiration is an antecedent conviction of what it ought to be, what it must be to subserve its purposes. It is a deductive, not an inductive spirit which rules them, one of assertion rather than of inquiry. Thus Dr. Hodge says, "The object or design of inspiration is to secure infallibility in teaching."* When

* Systematic Theology, vol. i, p. 155.

we use a dangerous method, we should at least use it with caution. We do not at all accept this necessity of authority, which lies between us and a frank appeal to the spiritual complexion of the Bible itself, an inquiry into its obvious facts under their obvious features. The valley may be haunted, but we prefer to institute the inquiry on the ground itself; we are not to settle the question before we reach it.

Authority, that is what is needed and must be obtained, with or without appearances. This need of authority explicit and final, we must not only deny, but must regard it as the precise thing which has been and always will be ruinous. It is a requisition that springs neither from our intellectual nor our spiritual constitution; is a want incident only to the dogmatic temper, and so to spiritual tyranny. Authority, clear, complete, immediate is destructive of thought, gives no play to sincerity of inquiry, and sets no store by that spiritual training which is the condition of all large and deep comprehension. Not those merely who do the will of God, but any one can know of the doctrine, since that doctrine has received explicit, sufficient, final statement. So certainly does growth depend on intellectual activity, that having introduced a precise and authoritative element into the word of God, the same parties are compelled to practically lose it again, by insisting on investigation, honesty, effort to discover it. Authority is as much lost by truth that is not understood, as by truth not stated; indeed, the things are inseparable. All that a dogmatic spirit gains, if it allows any difficulty in an instant, perfect apprehension of divine truth, is, that the inquiry it puts us on is one of verbal research into the Scriptures, not one of profound research with the sacred writers themselves into principles. In fruitfulness and enthusiasm there is no comparison between the two

kinds of inquiry, while in authority they equal each the other.

This view of the need of authority involves endless impossibilities and absurdities. The intellect thrives by inquiry, free, bold, constant,—for this only is inquiry—while the growth of the spiritual affections is incident to the same effort, and carries it forward from one stage of progress to another. The ability to understand divine truth is due largely to the interpretation of pure, varied, upright emotion ; the integrity of the emotion steadies, renews and enlarges the inquiry ; while the new truths elicited deepen and cleanse the emotion. Authority as authority cuts short the processes of growth in cutting short inquiry, or in predetermining its results. Authority, anywhere within the range of inquiry, is intellectual tyranny, is remanding the mind to conclusions not its own, to methods of inquiry and to issues which others have shaped for it, as against those which lie within its own resources. The leaders of the church, the framers of theological systems, are wont themselves to bring to bear the boldest criticism, criticism often full of personal tincture and bias, or what is far worse, assertion unsustained by criticism ; for them, then, to deny a like freedom to their disciples is spiritual usurpation, is for them to think, and by virtue of their thought to refuse thought to others. As no inspiration, no authority can be so simple as not to call for an administration, the assertion of that authority becomes the support of that administration, and the point of fixation settles at once from the divine to the human level.

What we really need are fruitful directions of research, changing, expanding truths, the acquisitions and the discipline of inquiry, the intellectual and spiritual rewards of religious industry. Fixed truths, explicit truths, are no truths, or the most restricted truths, the most dead truths ;

and to transform our beliefs and faiths into these is to first famish, and then extinguish, the life to which they minister. We want instruction not authority, guidance and impulse not arrest, truth as the product of our own minds, as addressed to those minds, not verbal statements.

But if we did require authority, infallible instruction, we could not, under the present constitution of the human mind, secure it. The notion of its possibility comes from a false view of religious truth, of language, and of our powers of comprehension. There are primitive, mathematical ideas like those of a line, an angle, a surface, which are definite, unchangeable, the same for all. These may be so lodged in language that minds competent to mathematical inquiry shall fully and exactly entertain them. This very fact makes the rudiments of mathematics spiritually the most unproductive of all branches of knowledge. When we reach the complex, expansive truths of religion no such process is possible. No proposition about God, the human soul, immortality, can be, in its direct and indirect bearings, one and the same thing for all minds, scarcely for any two minds. The single word, *God*, is one back of which any number of conceptions, with as many degrees of adequacy and inadequacy, can be put, and are put. The exact coincidence of any two of these it is impossible to determine. The great diversity of most of them is perfectly obvious. The other terms of religion are more or less of the same nature, sin, holiness, atonement, sanctification, incarnation. These words are signs which stand for very different thoughts to different minds. The bugle-notes of various chiefs gather not, in their respective clans, a following more diverse in appearance and character, than do these catch-words of doctrine in different sects, uttered as the rallying cry of faith. It is impossible, wholly impossible, to put into lan-

guage an extended series of religious truths,—and the greater the scope of the truths the greater the failure—that shall mean the same, or essentially the same, thing for many persons of various powers, circumstances, and characters. Indeed the discrepancies of belief are largely these inevitable discrepancies of apprehension. For any to insist that certain propositions are authoritative and complete, the same for all, when they will not intrust them to those who accept them for restatement, lest the thought should slip in some way its enclosing formula; when no two can discuss them without developing a difference of apprehension, is to misunderstand the possibilities of knowledge, and, under the color of a verbal agreement, to play off upon themselves and upon others a gross deception as regards the unity of faith. There is and there can be no extended unity of faith among masses of men which is not a dead verbal unity; to diverse intellects, diverse feelings, diverse experience, diverse culture, diverse purity, common insight is impossible. Fundamental principles involve this. To him that hath shall be given. If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine. Knowledge is not, then, given, but gained. Nor are the truths of our faith of so barren a character as to admit immediate, exhaustive statement. All the resources of mind and heart must be brought to their interpretation, and only as the spirit grows, will the truth grow that nourishes it.

As authority in faith in any exact, extended sense is undesirable and impossible, so, as a matter of fact, the church has not possessed it. The Catholic church presents the largest formal unity of any Christian organization, but so far as belief is concerned, it is to a great extent a perfectly dead unity, a unity without, of organization, and a unity within, of passive assent, only here and there sus-

tained by anything which approaches personal insight and faith. Let there be life, individual life, and diversity and independence will disclose themselves at once. So true is this that the two propositions are convertible. Are those Protestant churches at one in doctrine which accept the Scriptures as equally inspired in every portion? Far from it. They sacrifice a great deal for authority, but still miss in practice the authority they have saved in theory. Each sect rather has been made more violent against other sects, and broadened division by virtue of this very authority. Equal and complete inspiration leaves little room for honest error, and allows nothing to be regarded as unimportant. Hence each must urge his own view as the divine word, and denunciation and recrimination easily follow. One is not at liberty to be charitable, if he is enforcing the explicit commands and statements of Heaven.

Holland, above other lands, has been remarkable for Scriptural dogma and textual authority. Has it, therefore, escaped heresy on the one side, or dead unity on the other? Both of these have fallen to it in full measure. "Nowhere was the proverb, Every heretic has his letter, so common and yet so true as in Holland."* Yet Hurst is ready to say, "Grant the rationalistic denial of inspiration—equal inspiration—and we have no solid ground for any portion of the Bible."† Is it possible that the only alternative to the human mind is to believe everything or believe nothing, to be led or to run wild? Has it no faith in the injunctions, "Try the spirits whether they are of God." "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good?" Or are we to suppose that the Bible applies one law to the words of others, and another to its own words? Obstinate, narrow heresies, irrational and pestiferous dogmas have

* Hurst's History of Rationalism, p. 345.

† Ibid, p. 202.

again and again sprung up from some single passage of Scripture, literally rendered under a rigid idea of inspiration. The more inflexible is the interpretation, the more incurable and bitter the division it occasions. The early reformers found these influences, in many instances, so repellant as to overmaster the affiliating forces of common interests, common dangers, common love.

There are two movements in mind, a transient and lower one, a permanent and higher one. In the one, authority makes way for truth ; in the other, truth makes way for authority. The one belongs to the uncultivated and vicious mind, the other to the cultivated and virtuous one. Authority, evoked in support of the truth, obscures it as truth ; and brought to the aid of error is wholly pernicious. Truth left to itself begets authority, a wholesome authority, more and more to be relied on. A partial, perplexed method, normal only to the mind which will not act as mind, is, by the doctrine of equal inspiration, established as the controlling law in the Kingdom of Heaven.

If we look closely at the constituents of Scripture, we shall see that an inspiration which crowds back the human element never yields any gains and at times inflicts great losses. A large portion of the Bible is historical. All the inspiration that is requisite for these simple narratives is knowledge and honesty. Any divine influence beyond these, must conform itself to this grade of quality which falls to an intelligent, upright man. To insist that the writers of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, should be accompanied, in every portion of the composition, by an essentially supernatural and completely controlling influence, is to destroy all harmony between means and ends. Such effects as these can be reached, and are constantly reached, by no peculiar divine inflatus. To send the

Divine Spirit on a service wholly within the scope of the human spirit is to degrade it, not to elevate it. An inspiration of this kind demands for its completion constant intervention in the transmission of the Word ; as it is restrained by no reserve in reference to natural agents, and loses its own work if it abandons it thus early. There are two things of interest in histories of remote periods, the authenticity of the works, the knowledge and intelligence of the writers. These points are equally involved in the value of the productions, and to set aside the one by divine intervention, and remand the other to the liabilities of natural forces is to do things by halves, is to pursue an unequal and indefensible method. The same feeling that deters us from asserting an overruling divine force in transcription, transfer, translation and canonical compilation, should equally deter us from setting aside the natural forces of the original composer. Why fling to one a rope over the face of a precipice, if it still hangs far from his reach? Why a gratuitous assumption, when it is at the same time an incomplete one? If natural means are sufficient to transmit historic truth, they are sufficient, in the first instance, to frame it.

A general providence, a concentration of natural forces, of spiritual and intellectual life, which avail in the one case, may equally avail in the other. To intrust one half of an inseparable, simple process to miraculous, and the remainder to natural, agencies, is to adopt a method incongruous and futile. These same considerations are in force, if we simply assert an inspiration that anticipates and prevents error. We are still only half-way to our goal, and the journey thus far has cost us dearly in the spirit of our exposition.

A second, a large and most valuable, portion of the Scriptures, are the statements of religious truths and of

spiritual impressions under them, truths and impressions which fall to purified, elevated thought, to quickened, spiritual affections. The truth-vision and the emotion alike belong to a high spiritual plane, are the out-break of a life that is coming to move freely in an upper region. They presuppose the cardinal principles of religion, whether reached by inquiry or by revelation, and translate these into a glowing life. Many of the Psalms, portions scattered everywhere in the Old and the New Testament, preëminently some of the out-bursts of St. Paul are of this character.

The value of these words of exalted insight is weakened, not increased, by supposing them to have been spoken under an exterior, or in any way alien, impulse. Their sincerity, their personality are their power.

The passage opening with the words, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" is of inestimable worth, primarily because it expresses the faith, courage, enthusiasm of St. Paul. No influence whatever can enter to advantage between these words and the soul that uttered them. We draw near and listen that we may learn the transforming, vivifying love of God. To this height he was lifted, to this height we may ascend. We find the love of God in this outpouring of the heart of Paul more freely than we can find it in any other way. In the measure in which these truly inspired words transcended the consciousness of St. Paul, were beyond him, are they first lost to him, and then lost to us. Let him stand on this eminence, and tell us of the rapt vision, and shortly we stand with him, and see what he sees. What we need is communion with God through other spirits, stronger than our own, and this we have in these utterances of Scripture, regarded simply as responses of the human heart under divine truth. Looked on any other wise, these passages

of devotion lose their power ; as mere formulæ of truth, they are inapt, cold, barren, missing that contact of life with life which can alone impart to them heat, spiritual substance. There is here no place for double meanings or double dealings. We wish to know whether David, Isaiah, Paul, were so lifted up by the truth, did so rejoice in the presence of God as they seem to have done. If these words express the normal results of the spiritual life, then they vibrate with emotion in their every syllable, they are the best realizations of the best things ; if they do not, then, in the precise degree in which an exterior inspiration wrought in them, have they and we fallen off from the Kingdom of Heaven. The depth and sincerity of these avowals are their first, their sole, value. They would so far lose their true character under a controlling inspiration as to be of doubtful morality, of questionable truthfulness, uttered otherwise than with immediate insight and spontaneous feeling. This portion of Scripture includes not merely emotional utterances, but also the statements of principles, precepts, the inherent truths of religion and morality. These, spoken with perception and conviction, are quite other than if spoken without them. They certainly always imply, and ought to carry with them, this rational belief and interest on the part of the writer. Moreover, they are addressed to just such belief and discernment on our part, and we do little credit to evangelist and apostle if we suppose them to have had a less normal hold on the truth than we are to seek for ourselves. But if they had insight and conviction, why should not these be left to do their natural and desirable work ?

A third and much smaller portion of Scripture remains, facts which lie necessarily beyond the range of human vision, facts which put the Bible in manifest and continuous connection with the supernatural. We have no desire

to straiten the supernatural either in the facts recorded, or in the record itself. We admit it lovingly not grudgingly, and only wish to know it wisely. Yet one may be surprised, if he inquires, to see how small a portion of Scripture necessarily implies more than normal powers, or must rest for its force on their presence. It is only restricted facts, not principles, not the sweep of great truths, that call for this reference. No principle in exegesis would be more fruitful and healthful than this, to allow the natural, the ethical, the rational to have way freely, and to claim freely all that belongs to them. Many a perverse statement rests on no other ground than inspiration evoked expressly to narrow down language, and give it the impulse with which it is to override reason. The leading statements even of a future life are outlined in man's moral nature, and anything much beyond these is neither given, nor recognized as something proper to be given, in the Word of God. The support which the Scriptures receive from prophecy is very limited, and the moral office which it subserves in any precise form almost equally limited. In our own time we are more often compelled to call in the moral force of the Scriptures to sustain its prophecies, then we are found able to sustain its principles by its predictions.

Yet prophecy, a future life, specific conditions of salvation, so far as they do imply a higher inspiration than that normal to the historically instructed and spiritually quickened mind, may be allowed freely to claim it, though found in connection with a general life and experience resting on a lower basis. This infusion of the natural by the supernatural, this lifting human action into its highest and most sufficient form by the transient vigor of the divine, is the characteristic feature in the history of God's kingdom, and may well be in that particular portion of it

known as Revelation. As the miracle may cast light on events otherwise purely natural, so these higher expressions of an indwelling Spirit can at once maintain their own power, and lend that power to the more narrow facts, or more restricted range of truths, with which they are affiliated. We may grant this the more readily, if we remember, that the principle, if, in one view, more narrow than the prophecy, is, in another, far broader than it ; that if it is sustained it also sustains ; that if pinnacles, here and there in the religious structure that ages have reared, glitter with a light reflected straight from heaven, it is none the less strong foundations and firm walls that hold these stars in their places. The divine in word and work, resting everywhere on its two component facts, must be in each self-sufficient, upheld by combined internal and external conditions, by harmonized natural and supernatural forces. If we yield either, we lose both for the purposes of religion. If we abandon the supernatural we miss the spiritual power, if we surrender the natural in its full force, we let slip the material on which that power is to expend itself.

The Scriptures have a very diverse value for us in their different parts. As a record of historical facts, facts that stand associated with the race and the development of God's spiritual kingdom, we seek for them sufficient proof. As containing truths, outlining the order of the moral universe, we wish to find in them an illumination, a revelation to the human heart and reason, able to justify and sustain them. So and so only can the truth of principle work its results. It must be left with the mind to unfold itself in a living way, or it remains forever hid. Barren iteration, sharp authority only interfere with and repress this growth. As containing assertions of the divine presence or the divine government that transcend

experience, we call, in the Scriptures, for a vivid, continuous disclosure of a divine element, something we can recognize as such, and make an object of rational faith. Authority beyond these conditions, or infallibility beyond them, is intellectually unattainable; and asserted as a fact serves to weaken, overshadow and stultify our powers of mind and heart.

We do seek after a coherent development of religious truth, one line of growth for the kingdom of God, an assured unfolding of grace, to which our inquiries may be directed, on which our faith may be fastened, into which our labors can be gathered. The historic interdependence of every portion of the Scriptures, their varying and enlarged discipline, their increasing revelation, their coherent and expanding system, a system of events and truths alike, give them by right their central position and value in the spiritual development of our race. There is no denial in this that the providence of God may include other messengers, other forms of training, other sporadic truths, other dispensations in the progress of the world besides those gathered into this regal line, but only the unwavering belief that in the Old and the New Testaments are gathered up the continued disclosures of truth, the growing discipline, the increasing light, the essential and successive steps, that mark the progress of the Kingdom of Heaven along its primary line of development. Here is a history not of nations nor of races nor of branches of knowledge, but a history of central religious truths, enlarged by development and by revelation, subordinating to themselves under the providence of God, the lives of individuals, the life of a nation, and at length culminating in the coming of Christ, who combines all elements, spiritualizes all forces, discloses to the race the fundamental conditions of salvation, and sends forth on their

mission those germinant conceptions of holiness, righteousness, divine love. The Bible, as containing this history, as marking the stages of this Revelation, gives at once a new character to all who have stood in the line of transmission, who have in the least come into, or helped to reflect, the light that streams backward from the cross of Christ, or gathers in supreme radiance about it, or pours down upon us from it. It is not because Peter and John and Paul were in themselves different from other men, or were overshadowed by a power alien to them, that we study their words, but because they stood near the cross, were partakers in the events of that crowning, spiritual epoch, caught its spirit, laid hold of, and were laid hold of by, its natural and supernatural forces. These men are made by their periods even more than they help to make them, and these successive periods and these growing revelations of the Testaments are all in all to us as spiritual beings. Herein are held the religious history, the moral gains, the spiritual hopes of our race. By these living forms of truth we trace our growth backward to its sources, and in them we discover the laws and the powers that are to bear it forward to its consummation. The Bible does not need a uniform inspiration to seal its value to men, or give it authority with them. Its facts, known for what they are, aside from any miraculous record of them, interpenetrated throughout with living spiritual elements, the elements that have slowly fallen to us under God's discipline, have a hold on the earnest mind that can only be disturbed and weakened by an inspiration giving accentuation to the syllables of command, rather than clear utterance to the words of exposition. Inspiration that is equal, final, does this. We are to hear rather than inquire, accept rather than judge, tremble at the letter rather than quietly imbibe

the spirit, give an eye-shot to words rather than a prolonged search into things.

"But it is the peculiar fate of sacred writings, that the last thing elicited from them is their own real meaning. The very greatness of their authority puts the reader's faculties in a false attitude; creates an eagerness—an inflexible intensity—that defeats its own end; and, in particular, gives undue ascendancy to the uppermost want and feeling that may be craving satisfaction."* This overawing, paralyzing influence is greatly aggravated by a doctrine of complete inspiration.

Not only do we find in the Scriptures that kind of value and that degree of authority which are requisite to give them organizing power; they can also, having united men in Christian churches, unite them by unity of belief and feeling in one kingdom. Unity is desirable, but only that unity which is consistent with life and springs from life, a life among whose permanent conditions are diversity, change, growth, a life inconceivable without mobility and freedom. A unity of this sort is approached slowly, approached by inquiry, by charity, by coming to understand the changeableness of truth, its evanescent boundaries, its leading directions, the barrenness of its intellectual formulæ, the fruitfulness of its emotional possessions.

Lines of thought converge in the religious world, but they meet a great way off. Like beams of sunlight they may seem to come together when they do not. The illusion is a brilliant one, but none the less an illusion. The real unity of these living thoughts is the unity of the bars of light, that they seem to come and do come all from one source, and work as one set of forces and like blessed results. Unity, the only feasible and desirable unity, which can come to lovers of truth is that unity which

* Studies of Christianity, p. 415.

arises from the delight which each and all have in their own convictions, in light known to emanate from one source on one errand, yet felt to be the more beautiful and serviceable because dispersed and colored by every object it touches. This unity, authority, urgent and coercive, breaks up at once. Most are dislodged from their own pivot of thought, and, like a needle lifted from its bearings, they vibrate no more under the subtle, variable forces that range the universe; they hold fast where mechanical force has brought them to rest. Dead unities, formal agreements, have subserved a purpose in the world's history and may still subserve one, but are none the less baneful, when they stand in the way of those higher affiliations which give play to life, a religious life overpowering by the attractions of love the repulsions of thought, and generating by thought the warmth of renewed affections. An army can do what citizens can not do, but a soldier is a poor substitute for a citizen.

There is, then, no such antecedent claim for an authority, spread evenly over every portion of God's word, as to prejudice our inquiry into the kind of inspiration that seems to be indicated by the facts themselves of Scripture. To the Scriptures, in their obvious features, we may turn in pushing the inquiry, What constitutes inspiration? The apostle Paul seems to recognize spiritual insight, a large measure of inspiration, as a generic state shared by all believers, by all who yield to and pursue the revelation of the Spirit. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."* The largest discernment and liberty in the handling of spiritual truths are here

* I Cor. ii. 14.

referred to believers, to those taught of God, as their common birth-right. Truth, all truth is freely yielded to the judgment of the spiritual, as those who may judge but may not be judged, who are helped and shielded in their judgments.

The obvious differences in value of various portions of the Scriptures can not easily be overlooked. The text ranges from the words of our Lord to the most barren chronicles of a single nation. To parts of the Bible it is difficult to assign any spiritual service, at least for our time. The registrations of Numbers, Chronicles, Nehemiah, the minute ceremonial of the Levitical law, may have a historical interest, but furnish for us no direct lessons, no truths pertinent to our experience. It is impossible to use them as ministering to devotion, purifying the heart, renewing the life.

What is true of large collective portions of the Bible is true in a less degree of detached parts. The Proverbs range from high moral principles to the ordinary level of worldly sagacity. To attribute to these different passages anything like the same spiritual value is to sin against common sense, and to sin against common sense is to subvert the foundations of intelligence. To admit this diversity of character and value in portions of Scripture yet attribute them to one unfailing source of inspiration, working in all with equal authority, is to shift the error, not to reduce it. Under such a view we must shut our eyes stupidly, almost willfully, to the obvious qualities of truth, and its obvious references, ascribing things unequal and changeable to one equal and unchangeable source. A gross offence of this sort against ordinary perception and argumentation is no preparation for the disclosures of Revelation.

The theory of an overshadowing inspiration throughout

the Bible, in the face of these plain and extreme differences, leads to fantastic interpretation. Newman offers an illustration of this in his *Irish Clergyman*. This man, under a theoretical obligation to put to some broad and sufficient use every portion of Scripture, even the simple direction of Paul to Timothy: "The cloak I left at Troas bring with thee and the books, but especially the parchments," succeeds in this wise: "I should certainly have lost something if these words had been omitted, for that is exactly the verse which alone saved me from selling my little library. No, every word, depend upon it, is from the Spirit, and is for eternal service."* It would be difficult to devise a kind of reasoning better fitted than this to produce a frame of mind, a style of thinking, inconsequential, incoherent and fanatical. The slight coloring—and it is very slight—given the conclusion by the passage arises solely from the injunction as a natural injunction expressing the interest of Paul in his books. In a like way, a predetermination to find in the *Songs of Solomon* a spiritual allegory unconsciously leads to an exegesis that sets reason and criticism at defiance. Intelligence and honesty, plain and stubborn, are the permanent preliminaries of religion, and anything in conflict with these, is, to the same degree, in conflict with religion.

A second obvious variety in the power and purposes of the Scriptures, calling for a like freedom of rendering, is that found in such books as *Job*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Psalms*. The value of these books depends chiefly on their correctly representing the subjective state of their writers and interlocutors. *Job* furnishes the most unmistakable illustration of this type of Biblical composition. The book is in the highest degree interesting and instructive, if we regard it as presenting the struggle of diverse minds—a struggle

* *Phases of Faith*, p. 19.

characteristic of the race and time to which it belongs—for an exposition of the divine character and government, a struggle issuing on many sides in error and only partially correct, or at least partial, in its best conclusions. On a theory of complete inspiration, it is difficult to see how anything more than this can be reached, or how we shall be able to decide, in the words of Job and of his friends, what is and what is not confirmed by the Spirit. We necessarily interpret the whole poem pictorially and not didactically; and to its pictorial force no controlling inspiration is requisite. So also Ecclesiastes is profitable for instruction and correction just in proportion as we escape the idea that each passage is a complete, categorical statement of religious truth, in proportion as we rise above them all, conceive the state and spirit of the author, and trace in the book the confused, contradictory, half-illuminated experience of one who, if not Solomon, like Solomon, had perverted without smothering his spiritual nature.

In these and similar cases, the verity of the picture, its reality, its faithfulness, constitute its value. Portions of the spiritual experience, the hopes and the fears, the clearer and darker renderings, of minds distracted by cross-lights, are given us, and we are brought correspondingly near to the human heart, to the living processes that transpire there, and to God's providences in it and over it. This is what we must understand a book like Job to be, before we can profitably peruse it. We are left to compare its experiences with our experiences, the light that fell to its characters with that which comes to us, and in a comprehensive, penetrative way to take from it the instruction and encouragement it has to give. No textual value can be safely attached to single assertions, till the force of the whole book, in its collective character, is settled. If we accept the above view, or a kindred view of the book

of Job, then an overshadowing inspiration in the writer is an embarrassment, not a gain. There is nothing in the results to show it ; there is nothing in the object to require it. That object is a correct rendering of a section of human experiences, the result is that object successfully reached, apparently by natural resources. If we regard the product as a supernatural one, we gain nothing. The narrative is therefore no more exact, neither is its exactness better seen by us. We seek a faithful portraiture, and all that the fullest spirit of inspiration could give under these conditions would be a fac-simile, a verisimilitude. Why refer a photograph to a divine agent, when a sun-beam is present to trace it? This is to humble the supernatural, to waste the natural, and to separate us more and more completely from both. We grasp neither well without the other.

If we regard the Scriptures as throughout the explicit work of the Holy Spirit, we shall be distressed by portions of them that seem incorrect, or in conflict with other portions, and be led either to accept that which disturbs our moral sense, or to wrest it from its obvious meaning. Christ, in bidding us to forgive the offender for seventy times seven offences, made the law of repentance and forgiveness, or rather indicated it to be, universal. We know of no sound religious philosophy that can harmonize this principle with the imprecatory Psalms. "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." The attitude of vengeance and that of forgiveness are irreconcilable, neither are they combined as equivalent facts in punishment. Punishment carries with it the rebuke and the yearning love of righteousness, and so affiliates with forgiveness not vengeance. We can not be called on for the same steadfast adhesion to these words of the Psalmist in their spirit as to those of Christ. Human vengeance is

not divine mercy, nor divine justice even. Perplexity and dishonesty are the natural results of such a conflict. We strive to believe things incompatible, or to make compatible things which are in obvious conflict ; either effort is a wrench at our moral nature. That the sentiments of men should be imperfect, whose actions were still more imperfect, is not surprising, nor does it lay upon us any heavier burden to discern the quality of these words, and guide our actions accordingly, than it does to separate the good and the evil mingled in those lives. Why should we demand instant, complete adhesion to what David says and not to what David does ? Can we be so sure that the inspiration that is with him in his life, yet at times fails him so fatally, never grows weak in his thoughts, or dims its light under his passions ? Must we alloy the Psalms of praise and thanksgiving by the spirit of the one hundred and ninth Psalm as we accept them ? Are we to suppose the Holy Spirit saved David from error for our sakes, when it did not save him from error for his own sake ? Frankness, a freedom in seeing what seems to be, have much of the same wholesome, moral force in dealing with our canonical books, that they do in dealing with our own personal claims. Infallibility, the claim of it and the belief in it, work mischief in anything that pertains to man.

The apostles, while they were with Christ, again and again missed the spirit of his words. Shall we render it, by our view of inspiration, impossible that they should ever have done the same thing when separated from him ? Shall we deny that they caught but partially his teachings in reference to a second coming, and so were themselves led, and led others, to expect a more rapid development of the kingdom of God than the facts have shown ; and shall we do this for no other reason than that we may rest

blindly on authority, and be excused from making our own inquiries, reaching our own conclusions, guiding our own actions? We know not when or how in God's discipline thought, investigation, personal responsibility, were pronounced so dangerous.

A third fact in the Scriptures themselves, bringing light to the question of a variable inspiration, one working truly and faithfully with the natural forces it employs, are the obvious traces, and that too in the most central portions, of natural, constructive forces, of conditions that have told upon the form and substance of the books. It is sufficient to mention the Gospels as an illustration. Diligent and skillful and profitable criticism has been directed to the relation of the Gospels to each other, to different apostles, and to previously existing material. Investigations of this character, prosecuted often by our best Biblical scholars, whether directed to the Gospels, the Prophets or the Pentateuch, presuppose natural agencies which have told decisively on the final result, even to the determination of the facts that should be given. This criticism, this scholarship, this inquiry are in direct conflict with an inspiration that moves by a sufficient supernatural impulse toward its own independent ends. These traces of natural conditions must be regarded as either deceptive, or as indicating natural forces really at work in shaping the Biblical books; but to the degree in which they fashioned the result, inspiration is set aside. Inspiration as a supernatural force leaves no traces, discloses no method of procedure, yields no history. God speaks and it is done. Geology was found in conflict with previous conceptions of creation for this very reason, it uncovered a record, it presented conditions, stages of growth, traces of natural forces, and so replaced the supernatural with the natural. It was no answer to Geology to say that the

world was created containing remains of former periods, that the miraculous disguised itself under the natural ; it is no more an answer to the argument now urged to affirm that the Gospels were dictated by the Holy Spirit in apparent, but not real submission to external conditions. God does not devise ostensible connections merely to mislead the human mind. His work is not less honest in Revelation than in nature. By this view we should miss not merely complete narratives, but moral integrity in the construction of incomplete ones. Every vestige, therefore, of natural forces, of the conditions of composition or compilation, which can be traced in the books of the Bible, is in conflict with the doctrine of a controlling inspiration, as much so as the history of the rocks with that of instant creation. The delusion and confusion that are sure to follow a refusal to deal fairly with sensible appearances, with primitive proofs, is well illustrated by the doctrine of transubstantiation. As soon as men could disbelieve their senses, or reject the obvious inferences therefrom, they could believe anything, and could refute nothing and establish nothing.

A fourth and still more obvious fact in the Scriptures, looking to the same conclusion, is that personal variety of thought and style which belongs so strongly to many of the authors of the Bible. This fact is not fairly met in the easy statement, that the Holy Spirit accommodates itself to the instruments it uses. That so flippant an explanation should find so general acceptance serves to show how often we stultify ourselves on religious topics, how much we hold in abeyance our ordinary powers of investigation and judgment. The style of expression, mode of thought and cast of emotion, that belong to a man, are not a mere garment that can be stripped off and cast on another ; they are as intimate to the inner life as the rind to the

fruit. The soul of man is not a bugle, that, by whomsoever played, imparts its own quality, timbre, to the music. The form and substance of an intellectual life are inseparable, as much so as the physical life from the body it develops. Personal peculiarities indicate personal powers in normal action, as clearly as any effects their fitting causes. We can not step lightly in and say, that the Spirit uses the minds of Paul, John, James, as instruments to play upon, and so accepts their natural forms and limitations. These forms and limitations are the unmistakable and inseparable mediums of the powers they express. Form of this kind has no existence without its appropriate spiritual substance, a substance as true to the form as the form to it. Form as the offspring of force contains and discloses its very nature; what can slip between them?

If we allow ourselves to be tempted to say, all things are possible with God, the irrational as the rational, the inconsequential as the consequential; he can speak in one way or another as suits his purposes, we are met not merely with the difficulty; that to speak in one way *is* to speak in that way, is to sink into that way, and to be rendered by that way, but also with a moral difficulty. If we have no compunctions in confounding the solid grounds of knowledge, in turning specific effects from their appropriate causes, we ought certainly to have some hesitation in subverting morals. And is it not such a subversion to assume misleading appearances; so to state the truth that it shall seem to have one origin and really have quite another? If God is to speak, why should he not, for moral reasons, speak in his own name? If he is to use agents, why should he not use them as freely and completely as he seems to use them? To assume a close fitting garment of personal appearances, unfaithful to the

facts it discloses, is duplicity. The words and actions of God must indicate the most scrupulous integrity, they must be what they seem to be. His revelations may to any degree transcend the thoughts of those who receive them, but they must meet those thoughts fairly, and lead them straight forward. A method that habitually and, as it were, with every variation of deception, announces itself ostensibly as one thing, yet in fact is quite another, can not lightly be attributed to God. Scriptures that have the constructive frame-work and coloring of natural causes all through them can not suffer a denial of this their first verity without a shock to that sense of truthfulness which it is a chief labor with them to inspire. Epistles, like those of Paul to Timothy, to Philemon, must express the feeling of the author, lie honestly, closely, singly about it, or they are nothing. To allow the mind to introduce in such connections as these a supernatural force, or to play it off upon words of purely personal affection, is to debauch the reasoning powers, and to make our perceptions obtuse and wayward: we come easily to affirm anything in the face of appearances, that is, in the face of proofs.

But the Scriptures in some cases deal directly with the reasons of composition, they also in single instances indicate the degree of authority claimed by the author, and introduce us partially to the conferences which the apostles held with each other in establishing a basis of common action. Luke opens his gospel with a statement of the reasons which led him to undertake the work, and they are his natural advantages for its safe performance, advantages that would be superfluous on the ground of a controlling inspiration. We should either have two causes for the same effect, or the obvious and assigned cause displaced by a concealed, unverified efficiency. "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration

of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed." His reason in personal knowledge for writing the Acts is equally apparent. If now we allow these natural forces freely to enter, and still strive to put over them a superintending inspiration, protecting from all error, we have no way of verifying this fact of supervision, we cannot well tell what it involves, for the partial and the erroneous are lost in each other, and we make void our ordinary methods of inquiry and criticism. Our method lacks homogeneity, suspends the canons of criticism, is without sufficient proof, and in the end misses the certainty for which we established it. In Hebrews ii. 3, the manner of transmission is defined in both its elements, the natural and the supernatural. The last is made the miraculous intervention which from time to time signalizes and confirms the first; not a force which displaces it.

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will."

Paul, in one instance, expressly disclaims any authority beyond that of a personal opinion. "I speak this by permission, not of commandment." "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord."* Farther on, as his conviction increases, he says, "She is happier if she so abide, after my judg-

* 1 Cor 7.

ment ; and I think also that I have the Spirit of God." This would seem to indicate that inspiration with him was not a recognizable, psychological state, but the variable force of truth. In the following passages there is a strong incongruity in the tenor of the style with the theory of complete inspiration : " I say again, let no man think me a fool ; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little. That which I speak, I speak not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting." " Seeing that many glory after the flesh I will glory also," " I speak foolishly," " I speak as a fool."* We would put no strain upon these words ; we merely insist that they indicate a most natural human movement of feeling, and are in spirit opposed to any other.

It is certainly difficult to suppose that the writings of the apostles, called forth as they were with their spoken words for identical ends of influence, should be constructed by a higher law of inspiration than the accompanying verbal instruction. Yet are we prepared to give to their daily speech and actions an inspiration sufficient to preserve them from error? Barnabas and Paul, Paul and Peter, Paul and the apostles, were at times found in positive disagreement, or in animated discussion. Matters of interest in regard to the Jewish observances were referred to the body of the apostles, and settled by them with conference and "much disputing,"—a disagreement that had already occasioned "no small dissension and disputation."† That this division of sentiment was but partially healed is evident from the epistles of Paul. Paul, under the pressure of an adverse criticism, asserts strongly his independent, personal, equal power. "But of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me : God accepteth no man's person : for they who

* 2 Cor. II.

† Acts 15.

seemed to be somewhat, in conference added nothing to me." *

When we recollect that this divided opinion arose between the apostles themselves, in reference to religious action of a most weighty character, and was only softened by warm discussion and protracted conference, we see plainly that they were guided by human judgment, and not by a peremptory, controlling, divine Spirit. A lack of entire coincidence in apprehension between Peter and Paul seems also implied in 11 Pe. iii, 16. "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood; which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." In the love which Peter expresses for Paul, we see that form of unity secured which is incident to earnest and disinterested men. There is not a supernatural, identical power at work within, but strong spiritual convictions rather, struggling with the discrepancies which fall to human minds, and human hearts. It is the plane of daily life on which these events are transpiring. If our Lord ascribes the words of David to the Holy Ghost, † he refers also those of his disciples to the same source; ‡ we ought therefore to interpret the one passage as the other by the facts which correspond to it. If a general indwelling spirit of truth is sufficient to cover the one assertion, it may be also to cover the other. We have no right to a stringency of meaning when inspiration is involved, which is not in harmony with the usual language of the Bible.

There are instances in which errors of action and belief, widely present in the world's history, and very mischievous too, seem to find, and have been thought to find, color in the Bible. One of these is the speedy second

* Gal. ii, 6.

† Mark xii., 36.

‡ Mark xiii, 11.

coming of Christ. This belief, in one form or another, has traveled down with the church for many centuries, refusing the correction of experience. "But this I say, brethren, the time is short."* "But the end of all things is at hand."†

Another error pernicious in itself and associated with a whole family of pestiferous follies has been that of celibacy. "These are they which were not defiled with women ; for they are virgins."‡ A third misconception or partial conception, still thrusting itself in the way of progress, arises from a too general and rigorous rendering of the instructions of Paul, of his estimate of women, their powers, positions, duties. If we overlook the restrictions which fall to times and persons, it is impossible to avoid the evils which follow these portions of Scripture. Inwrought error and precipitate tendencies in the human mind will certainly develop themselves in spite of exegesis, but under wiser interpretation they will not be able to drag the Bible into their service by the force of single texts, against its general spirit. If every word is a hook of steel it is difficult to escape such results.

A view of inspiration which allows it to unite in a free, variable way to the exceedingly diverse facts of Scripture ; to pass from the purely natural basis on which the thoughts and words of a good man are ordered, through more profound spiritual convictions, up to sudden insight and prophetic vision ; which admits its presence alike in the natural and in the supernatural according to the face which the facts themselves present, has this great advantage, that the Scriptures are brought nearer to our daily life, and their alleged errors and contradictions sink to their lowest value and inflict least injury on our faith. Every portion of the Bible retains its own independent strength, and to

* 1 Cor. vii. 29.

† 1 Pet. iv. 7.

‡ Rev. xiv. 4.

this adds that which falls to other portions. A failure at one point, real or apparent, whether attached to the original text or to its transmission, leaves other points unweakened. On the other hand, if we attribute to the Scriptures an inspiration supernatural throughout, pledged to every portion alike, we reduce the strength of the whole to the strength of the weakest part. Any error, any deficiency, any conflict, is at once serious. If the defences are partially broken down, the invading host enters. The one method puts the strength of the Scriptures at its maximum, at that of its strongest positions, in their additive, coöperative attitude; the other puts that strength at its minimum, at the defensibility of the most assailable out-work. Thus it has happened that the new truths of astronomy and geology have been thought, each in turn, to militate with Revelation, and have brought much disturbance to its disciples. Under a better view of inspiration they would have been wholly harmless. Any new interpretation when first offered may thus bear a hostile attitude; and any jostling of faith creates a species of panic. The alarmed bees of orthodoxy, at the mere approach of a stranger, swarm out to defend the hive. Discussion, change, progress are made difficult and perilous, unnecessarily so. Nothing is unimportant, nothing secondary, since a single flaw in the fragile, crystalline faith endangers, like a seam in a vase, its entire value. The rational defender of his belief can advance and recede, give and take ground, with boldness, understanding that the gains of the contest are not settled by holding or losing a particular territory. Even the difficulties and discrepancies of the Bible serve with him a purpose, for they show the natural, undesigned way in which it has arisen, they disclose it as a true historical product, falling to divided periods and scattered agents, and so they enable him to lay the more emphasis on its

inherent unity, the order and growth of its truths. They help to exclude the most dangerous and obtrusive supposition, that of deception.

A corresponding, personal, subjective advantage belongs to the more flexible theory of inspiration. If any assertion or action disturbs our moral sense, it is not laid upon us by divine authority ; our feet are not instantly caught by it as by a snare ; we are not compelled to suppress our best sentiments as if they too were a temptation and an error. We have time to wait, boldness to inquire, freedom to accept or reject explanation, room in which to institute a rational movement. We are not alarmed, as at sacrilege, when the accustomed rendering or familiar application of a passage is rejected ; our thoughts are at ease, and may honestly, diligently, fearlessly pursue the labors offered to them. Investigation, modification are in order, and that too on the ordinary condition of candor and intelligence. There are corresponding losses under authority with no compensatory gains. The most beneficent portions of God's word owe very little to external proof. Their strength is in them, and only as we perceive this intrinsic strength of the truth can it greatly bless us. A command, no matter how righteous, that rests on a force foreign to the mind and heart of him who receives it, thereby loses its chief power to bless ; and an interpretation that keeps the element of authority always uppermost, thereby conceals the most serviceable features of truth, its intrinsic rationality and fitness. Authority has only a very partial and transient service, and to put it foremost and make it permanent is to check growth, and establish in the highest domain a perpetual vassalage. A method that evokes inquiry, demands honesty, quickens thought and renews each instant the sense of responsibility, is in the line of our powers, and so in the line of God's discipline.

A belief in an instant, equal inspiration, or in any proximate doctrine, nourishes a seductive, deceptive dogmatism, which we can not too much dread as the enemy of peace and truth. There is sure to be some man, or body of men, who will assume the liberty of inquiry and theory, while denying it to others. It will be true of the Biblicist, that, with a subtile deception of himself and others, "he only wishes men to submit their understanding to God, that is to the Bible, that is to his interpretation" of it. The earnestness and blindness with which this is done make it none the less fatal to personal liberty and growth. What men have accepted, and are very largely accepting, under the authority of inspiration is the light of truth passed through the lenses of one or more minds, and casting its facts, in their dimensions, groupings and coloring, on some newly adjusted screen, which, with its carefully arranged images, is to remain an eternal syllabus of statement, that which vision may never again transcend. This modification of truth by the mind that presents it, is unavoidable, and without mischief, if it is well understood, and no one product is made the precise equivalent of divine truth.

We feel the more bold in using the Bible in a living way for our immediate intellectual and spiritual ends by observing the methods in which the disciples of Christ and Christ himself employed it. The apostles quote the Old Testament negligently, using one or another version at pleasure, deal hastily with the passages referred to it, and even, as in Jude, make a citation from a spurious book, that of Enoch. Indeed the freedom of the writers of the New Testament in quotation has been a stumbling-block, going so far as to lift the passages cited quite from their original purpose. We need not enter upon this point. It is sufficient for our argument that there is here a strong,

free hand, making such uses of the Bible as were present to the thoughts of the writer, with no scrupulous exegesis. What an unmistakable tinge is there of the purpose of the evangelist, of the immediate point pressing upon his mind, when he says, these things were done "that it might be fulfilled." The order of procedure is inverted under the headstrong argument. The prophecy is made to determine the events, not the events the prophecy. It matters little; the proof is the same, and the emotion greater.

The freedom of our Saviour in dealing with the Old Testament is more observable, as it proceeds on a much higher plane. The declaration with which he puts forth his own rendering of truth is the emphatic one of contrast; Ye have heard that it hath been said, but I say unto you. This introduction to his precepts is not so much one of command as one by which he makes ready for the enlargement of the truths before him, and to reissue them in a fresher, more living form. Thus he treats the institution of the Sabbath. There is no constraint thrown upon him by a previous divine message, no effort at reconciliation,—unless it be those words of his, explanatory of God's method, in which he refers the commands of Moses, pertaining to divorce, to a concession made to the Israelites because of the hardness of their hearts—but a representation of the subject under deeper insight and existing issues. It may be thought that the example of the disciples and of Christ weighs not, since they themselves, as inspired, might deal in their own way with the Bible. The apostles referred to the Old Testament as an authority. They adduced it in support of their own statements. Their method of use does, therefore, show the kind and measure of faith they reposed in the Scriptures. Any inexactness, any departure from the letter or spirit of the passage quoted, any haste of interpretation, indicate a free

and figurative rendering rather than that precise and verbal one, which is alone consistent with plenary inspiration.

Our Saviour's manner of reference to the Old Testament shows plainly that it had for him no permanent, binding force in the form of the message; but that he regarded the time as present in which it was to be displaced, or rather replaced, with more searching spiritual principles. If this is true of those leading injunctions and institutions with which he dealt, we are prepared to accept it as true of any or every portion of the Old Testament, whenever and wherever a profounder spirit is called for. If one inspired statement seeks enlargement, a fresh infusion of spiritual life, so may another. The truth of a changeable, progressive Revelation finds entrance, and we are left to follow it to its results. The view of previous generations is not, and was not intended to be, our view. We accept the fact that the truths of Revelation call for constant restatement, that they suffer from the men and races through which they are transmitted, and that variable, expanding life is a controlling feature in Christianity. But variability and expansion involve human elements, and only as human elements have found their way into the Scriptures. Even the words of Christ may have, must have, a changing force for changing minds and ages. We discover in Christ's teachings no effort to formulate religious truths for all times, but rather an effort to break the formulæ of the past, and to restore truth in his own time to freedom and life. He does not inquire exactly what they of old times must have meant, he puts instantly and easily out what he himself means, carrying home the new truths with the phrase, "I say unto you." The new wine has its own new bottle. So now may interpretation succeed interpretation, provided always that truth is replaced by richer truth, insight by deeper insight, and each generation is made a

larger heir of nature and Revelation. This is to allow the Gospel to bring forth first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear : and, says our Saviour, "So is the Kingdom of God."

"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child ; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly ; but then face to face. Now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known."*



CHAPTER XI.

Interpretation.

DEFINING inspiration by the facts which the Scriptures themselves present, we find comparatively few reasons for the doctrine that an equal, supernatural inspiration—equal because supernatural—pervades all parts of them. We do not seem to find, nor should we expect to find, in every portion of the Word of God absolute, explicit, complete truths, nor anything which very nearly approaches them. The possibilities of language and of human thought, the wants of men, the general methods of God, and the apparent facts of the Bible forbid our entertaining this view. It lies neither on the surface, nor is it sustained by profound reasons.

The style of interpretation, also, which has accompanied a belief in the constant, controlling power of the

* 1 Cor. xiii, 9-12.

Divine Spirit in the composition of the sacred volume, making it in a complete, immediate sense the Word of God, does nothing to incline us to the doctrine. It has been too often trivial, sad, mischievous and replete with passion. When Knox stood before Queen Mary, and justified the measures of the reformers in resisting and constraining her action by citing the example of Samuel in the slaughter of Agag, of Elias in slaying the priests of Baal, and of Phinehas in thrusting through Cozbi and Zimri, he maintained his cause by examples impertinent to the case, and thereby drew away his own attention and the attention of others from the true grounds of justification.* Such a use of Scripture necessarily confuses, oppresses, misleads the moral sense. Remote analogies and alleged divine authority are made to do the work of sincere inquiry, exact reasoning, justificatory social principles and a gentle spirit. Doubtless the argument of Knox was a short, effective one, fitted to the temper of the times ; but it was none the less fanatical and dangerous, a sword that at its next wielding might be found in the hand of a maniac. The man sustained the plea not the plea the man. In our day this style of interpretation has from time to time put large divisions of the church across the direct path of progress, intrenched them there behind the most dogmatic assertion, and made their faith justly a reproach and hissing. Slavery was sustained by Old Testament and New Testament, and the subjection of woman is still insisted on with like authority. A method of interpretation which is now preposterous,—as in the instance of the Irish clergyman already adduced—now fanatical, and now obstinately and fatally wrong, goes far to condemn its initial assertion, that of equal, unfaltering inspiration.

Another example of the perplexity and perversity of

* History of the Reformation, Fisher, p. 365.

thought involved in a too rigid dogma is furnished in connection with Leviticus xi. 6. The hare is there spoken of as a ruminant. It has the appearance of a ruminant, and was doubtless regarded as one, though it is not. Did Moses share the popular error, and so repeat it in this passage? This is a most natural and harmless supposition. Put in place of it the supposition, that the Holy Spirit, in reference to this plain close-at-hand fact, design edly admitted an error rather than to state a scientific truth, and we have a feeble, perplexing, and dangerous conclusion, in place of a most simple one. In either case the error is there to be explained and guarded against; but on the one theory it is referable to popular ignorance, on the other to a concession of the Spirit of Truth. Which of these two sources of error can we deal with most readily and wisely?*

If we take the opposite direction, and settle the degree of inspiration by the quality of the Scripture facts, instead of the quality of these facts by inspiration; if we expect the doctrine, like the angel of God, to disclose itself in its divine mission; if we give up the effort to cast a glamour of divinity over the human; if we cease to assert infallibility and put ourselves diligently to the labor of finding truth sufficiently complete and reliable for the ends of life, we shall, in going to the Scriptures, need principles of interpretation. We have surrendered the idea that there is everywhere verbal precision, unmistakable assertions, formal truths directly applicable to our experience, we must then be able to inquire, to judge, to expound, and these processes imply underlying principles.

We must study the Bible in the light of a correct philosophy. Science and philosophy alike should aid our inquiries, but preëminently philosophy. We are willing

* Bible Animals, Wood, p. 100.

to put this statement in a bold way, because the truth of it is so staunchly denied or so constantly overlooked. The point of irritation is that those very parties who scorn the aid of philosophy in exegesis, or who profess to draw their scheme of human powers from the Bible itself, do often, as a matter of fact, bring to it a most perverse mental science, and, having distorted all its precepts into conformity with their governing ideas, excuse themselves from a fair defense of their philosophy and their method by retiring behind the authority of the Scriptures. They first press the Bible into their service, and then defend their illogical service by this unwilling recruit. It is not those who most decisively deny authority to philosophy, or most unreservedly yield it to the Word of God, that are always the most worshipful and reverential seekers after truth.

Mental science as a science is as independent of the Bible as astronomy or geology. The Bible gives no more evidence of being intended to teach one science than another; and philosophy stands in no other relation than chemistry or physics to the Scriptures, save that its facts are much more constantly and closely involved in the questions dealt with by inspiration and are correspondingly more important for correct interpretation. So far as Revelation touches upon facts that come under the observation of science, it presupposes a knowledge of the principles of science that give a limit to its language and guide its thought. It does not itself turn aside from its primary purpose, but pursues this under existing knowledge, and subject to such modification as later discoveries may impose upon it. It does not turn revelation into the channels of science; it does not call in supernatural power for this end. Yet, says Dr. Hodge, "It is plain that complete havoc must be made of the whole system of revealed truth unless we consent to derive our philosophy from the Bible,

instead of explaining the Bible by our philosophy."* If we include in philosophy a statement of the powers of the human mind, there is no more reason why we should insist on drawing this from the Bible, than that we should interpret the facts of Geology by the first chapters of Genesis. Science in each and every branch of inquiry has to do with its own sufficient and independent proofs. It is left by Revelation to deal with its own facts, to search them out faithfully and interpret them systematically. It is not the office of the Bible to explain man, but its precepts and principles find their explanation in their application to such a being as man. What man's nature is, is a fact to be inquired into, and if the Word of God is not applicable to that nature, nothing can conceal its failure. The Bible presupposes man, addresses him as endowed with certain powers. The Bible does not prove the powers, gives them no exact and sufficient statement, but must itself be judged by its application to those powers when sufficiently and finally stated. Language does not primarily explain mind, but mind language. That the explanation may be reciprocal, the two expounding each other, is undoubtedly true, but the prior fact is mind, and the order of intrinsic dependence is of language on the mind to which it is addressed. We infer the powers of the mind from the language directed to it only because that language has presupposed and been shaped to those powers. Our nature explains Revelation, not Revelation our nature. Revelation makes no pretension to furnish those exact statements which alone are mental science.

A system of philosophy is involved in the Scriptures as in all dealings with man, but we are not, therefore, called on to evolve our philosophy from the Scriptures, if more abundant, immediate and plain facts lie elsewhere

* Systematic Theology, vol. I, p. 14.

within the scope of inquiry. The Scriptures, in their precepts, presuppose a knowledge of man to whom they are addressed, and only in a secondary way cast a reflex light on his mental constitution. A system of hygiene presupposes one of physiology, yet, in inquiry, physiology remains the primary and controlling science. It would be a strange and unreasonable inversion of procedure to insist that we must deduce our physiology exclusively from our rules of health, and this, lest independent inquiry should modify these practical conclusions. But it will be said, the precepts of the Bible are absolutely correct, and so give us an immutable factor in the problem to which other factors must conform. Our theoretical philosophy is justly called on, then, to bend itself to these unmistakable conclusions which rest upon it. If the precepts of the Word of God were capable of an independent and exact interpretation antecedent to philosophy, there might be some truth in this statement. As it is, the precept so involves the philosophy, the nature of man, that its significance turns thereon. The constitution of man is one term in the precept, and is always inserted at some value before the value of the precept can be known.

There is no objection to drawing confirmation for our philosophy from the fitting explanation it brings to human action, to the dealings of man with man, to the dealings of God with man ; this is a wise method, but to put an inflexible construction on Scriptural assertions, and then bend our view of the facts in man's nature to which they pertain to our exegesis, is to do our philosophizing first, blindly, unconsciously and deceitfully, and afterward subject our clearer, more deliberate thoughts to these prepossessions. We establish our premises in darkness, and use the light only to get our conclusions from them. Exegesis proceeds safely only in view of all the facts to which the language

pertains. We must know men, if we are to understand the way in which they are addressed, the methods in which their actions are dealt with, the regenerative forces set at work upon them. The method is explained by the material and the purpose, rather than these by that. This is the primary direction of thought, and it can not be wholly displaced by that which is secondary.

A philosophy of man is, therefore, needful to a full and correct apprehension of the Scriptures, and is in order of work prior to it. It does not thence follow that that philosophy must always receive an antecedent, theoretic statement. The unelaborated, unconscious philosophy of the popular mind is often nearer the truth, and so more wholesome, than the philosophy of the philosopher. But it does follow that the theologian, aiming to carry system into religious thought, must do it by the aid of an antecedent, sound philosophy, a correct rendering of man's powers, whose relations and discipline are under consideration. It is vain to strive to understand a system of sanctions, of rebukes and encouragements, of impulses to a new life, and to measure that new life itself, unless the being who is the object and subject of them all is also comprehended. Knowing something of man, we may know something of the fitness of God's dealings with him. The two terms of theology are God and man, and the controlling term, that is the one to whose powers all things are conditioned, is man.

There are two false methods of dealing with philosophy, or metaphysics, as its enemies love to call it. The one belongs to those who reverentially warn off this form of discussion from the Scriptures, as too positive, too complete in themselves, too divine to admit human philosophy, and then in their dogmas furtively inclose such a philosophy, in a most dismal, irrational form, forcing down all

things under the hard, cold will of God. These stern theories, subduing the human soul into impotence, are brought to the Bible, not developed from it; are surreptitiously stolen from the realm of philosophy, the proper field of warfare over them. In that battle-field the ground may well be trodden often and trodden hard in that prolonged struggle in which man wins himself to his own uses, his own laws, his own life. We relish not this being drawn into the temple of religion only that we may be overawed by its sanctity in asserting our rights. We have already seen that not till freedom is established is there any, the least, room for religion, as there is no basis of moral government in man's nature, nor any proof of a Moral Being from whom such a government can spring. Both terms sink together; God goes down with man in those all-engulfing natural laws and natural forces, which inwrap the universe through its every zone from pole to pole. A terminology may remain, but the things themselves are no more. We are impatient of a deceptive philosophy set to do the work of religion, and thereby relieved of its proper responsibilities; yet wasting the very field it pretends to cultivate, making sad havoc with the lives of men, their spiritual powers and religious hopes. A claim to immunity is a first step toward tyranny.

A second treatment of philosophy, scarcely less censurable, belongs to quite the other wing of inquiry, composed of scientists and literary critics. They reject philosophy as a thing of abstractions, unverifiable ideas, yet proceed at once to deal with man, society, theology, our present moral state and future hopes, as if they had not discarded the very branch of knowledge essential to such inquiries. To bring to these themes ideas that can be derived from no other source than philosophy, and verified nowhere else, and then to hope to hold in peace the recon-

structed domain of duty and religion because metaphysical discussions have been rejected in set terms, is a method that is able to escape the charge of dishonesty only by that of stupidity. Philosophy, equally for believers and unbelievers, is the field of religious conflict. Here the attack must be made, and here sufficient defenses set up ; since religion is spiritual, supersensual, interpretative in its force. The questions we wish to answer are, What faiths are valid in the soul of man? what faiths spring legitimately out of, and hence may rule wisely in, that soul? Christianity, all religion, ultimately stands or falls by its hold on the human mind. Without this, historic proof can yield no strength. Nothing is religious till the mind of man makes it so, and the religion that is evolved under and for his powers in their highest development will stand, as at once an essential product of his own constitution, and a necessary element of its farther unfolding. This language may seem to some strange, but it is as deeply reverential as that it displaces. Man's nature is God's work, and what is given in it is given by him. The hidden things of the world are entered into by spiritual powers, and there, not elsewhere, are their foundations and verifications. The correlation is absolute between truth and the mind of man, yielding to that truth the perceptive element ; if it fails, truth fails with it. To warn philosophy away from the Bible, is to reject the only faculties that can ever make a Revelation of it, understand or use one of its great principles. The Bible does not create the spirit of man, it *finds* it ; and its glory and defense are, that it approaches it so wisely, with such perfect adjustment to its powers. First man, then the Bible. Philosophy, sound philosophy, is the torch by which we read the sacred pages. It is the flickering, wind-blown light of this torch in the years past and passing which,

more than any other cause, makes them to be a period of uncertainty and unbelief. When man finds himself, his own spiritual vision, he will find God ; the two discoveries are so close to each other as to be almost identical.

But this makes our God, we are told, only a large-limbed man, so anthropopathic is our method. It might be well to inquire whether the conclusions of the human intellect are less completely anthropomorphic when made in one direction than in another ; when man sets up his systems in behalf of necessity, than when he constructs them for liberty and power ? Are those who reason in one way, giving one interpretation to the universe, referring it to a Maker, alone human, carrying their forms of thought and their familiar ideas with them, while those who evolve it and reëvolve it are in some way extra-human, with no tinge of restriction in their procedure ? Are we not all equally enclosed in our premises ? Do we not all reason from the principles we find applicable to the world and ourselves ? If we do not, we are certainly censurable as neglectful of our true data. He is wrongly anthropomorphic who is too definite, too precise, too dogmatic, who settles at once form as well as substance, distance as well as direction. It belongs to us rightly to reason from our own idea, under our own laws, by our own connections, toward things beyond us. When we are most thoroughly anthropomorphic, when we rally all our powers, when we interpret truth by nature and by man, by things without and things within, then shall we have the most reasonable hope of making our nearest approach to the conditions of being and stages of knowledge that are linked to, yet transcend, those about us. When we have been winged by skepticism, and in maimed flight can only flutter in the air ; when we have lost stroke on the spiritual side of our being, and are each instant sinking earthward, is our

Divinity, our Infinite, likely to be more or less full in the resources of being ; to hold, and have to yield, more or fewer of the elements of salvation ? If it belongs to "the not-ourselves" to disclose God, does it less belong to ourselves ? Far off, very far off is God, but he is at once the nearest and the greatest when the soul, measurably forgetful of "the not-me,"—as an antithesis to the me—looks straight outward, upward, through an atmosphere colored, mellowed and glorified by its own affections, to the Author of its being. God is more and higher as the maker of man than as the maker of all things besides him. Yet this assertion turns on philosophy, on the question, whether man is essentially more in the law of his being than nature ? Answer this in the affirmative, and we draw near to God in drawing wisely near to ourselves. This means of access—anthropomorphic if you choose to call it so—was prepared for us in the beginning. God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him. Indeed, some likeness somewhere is the essential condition of any knowledge of God.

Again this door—I am the door—is thrown open in the incarnation ; God disclosed in and through Christ. Christianity stands or falls through philosophy, a philosophy of liberty and spiritual intuitions. An incarnation of a nature alien to that of man is impossible. The thought must be as the word which is to convey it. As firm as is our belief in the spiritual powers by which we apprehend—not comprehend—God, so firm will be our belief in the Being disclosed by them. If we must approach religion with a sound philosophy before we can reach its out-lying principles, its first proofs, it should not astonish us to find that a wise philosophy is the first condition of wholesome exegesis.

The good and the evil in our own constitution, physical

and intellectual as well as spiritual, must be understood, the good and the evil in the world and in society, before we can apply correctly the principles of the Bible. The antithesis of religion to the world, the flesh and the devil will be fanatically misapprehended in one direction or another, till we have learned wisely to separate all that is admirable in human action and character from all that mars it. An off-hand searching of Scripture is sure to be a mistaken one. "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me." We may pick up these words of Christ quickly, and find their significance in mere will, the preference of God ; on searching them more deeply, we may see in them the inherent impossibility of bringing blessings to those who do not seek them, to those who have not given themselves to the truth, and so been given by it to its cleansing sequences ; we may see in them, the identity of God's action, the soul's action, rational action.

Another condition of correct interpretation, if we look upon Revelation as uniting itself closely to the condition and wants of those to whom it was primarily addressed, is historical criticism, a historical inquiry into the character of those to whom and through whom the Divine Word was given. The general nature of man gives the general conditions of Revelation ; the degree of development, the tendencies to obedience and disobedience belonging to those to whom that Revelation was directed, constitute a farther restriction. If language is explained as addressed to man, it is farther explained as addressed to such and such men, as shaped to their comprehension and necessities. Practical, religious truth has two resolutions, into general principles, and into variable applications. Into these enter personal and transient conditions, causing the truth, in its immediate use, to lose something of its generality, and

accommodate itself to the case before it. From applications we get back to principles, from the special uses of truth to its general statements, by eliminating the restrictions and accommodations that have been put upon it by the blindness of men and the obduracy of circumstances. Thus the principle is on the wing again, resumes its equipoise, and awaits new conditions.

The Bible has arisen under historical limitations, much of it under strict and narrow ones. As the narrative of events, the message of prophets, or the letters of apostles, it has felt the full force of the times with which it was dealing. National history, national character, personal character have been controlling, constructive forces. If Revelation appeared through human agents, under such limitations, and by submission to them gained fitness, the power to do its work, then the more clearly we recognize, and the more frankly we confess the fact the better. So fundamental is this truth that no exegete can or does wholly overlook it. The difficulty is that many, under an inflexible theory of inspiration, do not give the weight to the fact that belongs to it. They are fearful of allowing it its free range; they concede a general application to special statements without divesting them of the restriction of circumstances. They prefer implicit to wise obedience, assent to inquiry. It is no more true of the institutions and statements of the Scripture than of other historic developments, once right always right. It is the life not the form that is to be retained. The variable conditions of use are as distinct an element, one to be as uniformly considered, as the general principle on which it proceeds. The two together make up the case. The slavery and polygamy of the Israelites involve the principle that human rights are not absolute, complete, every moment applicable; but variable, subject to the shifting relation of the

parties. But this truth assented to removes all authority from scriptural precedents as applied to present facts. We are left subject to our own conditions, with the duty of putting them in the best practicable adjustment with the wants of men ; assured that the wisdom and good-will of our social laws will be their only vindication. Not only does the past bring no authority to the present, it may rightly be put upon its defense by us, and we may inquire whether its acts and truths, institutions and principles, were in such accord as the circumstances allowed.

Truths come to us through the Scriptures as do principles by common law. They are derived from cases decided under them, but wisely derived by omitting the peculiar features of each case, and penetrating to the spirit of justice on which it rests. We have also to determine how far peculiar perversity, the "hardness of men's hearts," have wrenched aside the principle in its application, carrying it even beyond the limits of strain to which the general conditions of progress subjected it.

Thus the truths of Scripture are to be watched and followed and rejoiced in as living principles, making their way slowly against many obstacles under many abridgments, and coming forward on each fresh occasion, at each relaxation of pressure, to assert something more, to claim a new field, with greater freedom and higher tendencies of thought. This constraint of dark times, obdurate races, and untoward conditions on Revelation ; the perverse historical facts with which it has all along been wrestling, must be present to the mind in bringing forward and applying afresh the truths of Scripture. Without this we are transplanting the old stock, not growing the new one from it.

A guide to interpretation quite akin to this of historical criticism, is a right estimate of the changing intellectual

temper of the human mind. At present men magnify natural law in the government of God, and there accompanies this tendency a feeling strongly adverse to all intervention. The ages to which the composition of the Scriptures fell were controlled by the reverse spirit. The distinction had not been firmly drawn between the natural and the supernatural. The reverence of a believing race, like the Israelites, showed itself by a constant and direct reference of events to God. They were not careful to distinguish between his action under natural law and his action beyond it; indeed this idea of law had slight hold on the mind, had received no adequate statement or sufficient enforcement. They did not well separate what God does from what he allows to be done. Pharaoh was raised up for the very purpose of disobedience, and his heart hardened like steel for this service. The sense of divine power showed itself by an immediate reference of all events to God, by allowing his will to express itself as directly in the transgressions of men as in their obedience. The Old Testament narratives receive an unmistakable coloring from this reverential but uncritical temper, this truth of feeling and error of thought. Its words have in them a force we must abate in reducing them to exact terms, since they group under one form of expression, natural and supernatural events, the direct and the permissive government of God. As the ancients did not think as we think, their language can not be regarded as the equivalent of our language.

In the New Testament, though this tendency is reduced, it still remains. The present outlines of thought were not drawn. Distinctions, important intellectually, but not significant in their immediate, emotional bearings, are not made, or if made, not steadily maintained. We are bidden to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling,

for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. These words bear a different construction to the purely reverential and the profoundly critical temper. They may be looked on as an unqualified assertion of the constant, creative preëminence of the divine will. So faith, with a freely submissive cast of feeling, will regard them. They may be taken to include the will of God in the righteous will of man ; work out your own salvation, for in your willing and working God works and wills. The highest will of Heaven adds itself to, and expresses itself in, the will of its servants. The one or the other view will be to us more fit, more reverential, according to our estimate of the nature and worth of human freedom.

We know how a biography is colored by the reverence of the writer ; how special providences multiply themselves, and spiritual elements obscure natural ones, when the attention of the narrator is directed primarily to the victories of faith, to the oversight of those of wisdom and industry. We need to bear a tendency like this in mind in reaching ourselves the exact truth. The early, uncritical and devout temper prevails in the Bible, depresses the natural, exalts the supernatural, and confounds the lines of division. A tendency characteristic of a primitive period was farther intensified by a peculiarly powerful race development. The same forms of speech remain with the Arabs of to-day. Baker, in his *Nile Tributaries*, says, "The conversation of the Arabs is in the exact style of the Old Testament. The name of God is coupled with every trifling incident of life, and they believe in the continual action of divine special interference. Should a famine affect the country, it is expressed in the stern language of the Bible. 'The Lord has sent a grievous famine upon the land,' or, 'The Lord called for a famine and it came

upon the land.' Should their cattle fall sick, it is considered to be an affliction by Divine command ; or should the flocks prosper and multiply during one season, the prosperity is attributed to special interference."*

Müller speaks of this diversity of view and of expression which characterizes different periods and races as a mental parallax, and well says, that if we fail to make allowance for it all our readings in remote times will be erroneous. "Nay, I believe it can be proved that more than half of the difficulties in the history of religious thought owe their origin to this constant misinterpretation of ancient language by modern language, of ancient thought by modern thought."† "In short, no man, we said, who knows nothing else knows even his Bible."‡ "The admirable maxim of the great mediæval Jewish school of Biblical critics: *The Lord speaks with the tongue of the children of men*—a maxim which is the very foundation of all sane Biblical criticism—was for centuries a dead letter to the whole body of our Western exegesis, and is a dead letter to the whole body of our popular exegesis still."§ Indeed, no exegete can honestly, fully proceed on this maxim, till he surrenders the dogma of complete inspiration, and every thorough exegete has, therefore, in his thoroughness virtually abandoned it.

We are not speaking of these diverse methods of thought as better or worse in one instance than in another, but as different and so requiring attention in transfer. Truth does not escape the effects of the medium through which it discloses itself, any more than light the changing states of the atmosphere, and this is a simple fact to be considered. To estimate the good and the evil of each phase of thought is not so easy. For this no single canon suffices. The

* Pre-historic Times, p. 426.

† Science of Religion, p. 25.

‡ St Paul and Protestantism, p. 7.

§ Ibid, p. 31.

ready reverence of an uncritical time may often fall short of true worship, and the reluctant worship of a critical period may sometimes include the profoundest reverence.

There are, as intimated, two directions in which this atmospheric coloring in the Scriptures is peculiarly strong. The first is along the boundary line of the natural and the supernatural, the second is along the division between human liberty and divine activity. The language of the Bible is popular, and as neither of these distinctions is much thought of or clearly held in view in early times, we must expect to find the same forms of language applied indiscriminately to both kinds of action, the natural and the supernatural, the human and the divine. In the immaturity of thought, the supernatural and the divine would necessarily be the gainers as against law in nature or liberty in man, since reverence would delight in this immediate, submissive reference of events to the Maker of all, and would not be able to correct its view by the profounder truths of law. This parallax between the positions of faith and criticism in looking at religion demands the attention of the exegete, and must bring frequent corrections. Prepared, as we are, freely to recognize the supernatural, we would yet remember how readily it steals into the domain of law and duty, and subverts them.

A fourth guide to interpretation is found in evolution as applied to revealed truth. Few fail in some measure, consciously or unconsciously, to accept this progress of Revelation; most fail to admit it freely to its full extent. A continuous, progressive unfolding of divine truth is made necessary by the nature of man. So long as man's capacities, his spiritual powers, are on the increase, so long must there be a corresponding gain in scope and clearness of the truths which are to call out and sustain that life. Fixed dogmas, formulated statements can not

do this work. The more exact and final are the terms which truth assumes, the more narrow is its influence, the more rapid its decay in power. Truths which are to deal with a living spiritual nature must have corresponding scope and growth, must be about it, no matter whither it moves, as fresh, invigorating, richly colored air, giving to familiar things new disclosures. No loss could be greater, no limitation more disastrous, than that falling to our religious nature from the possession of final, sufficient dogma. Religious truth above all truth will be perpetually restating itself in the earnest, vigorous mind.

The nature of truth also compels this progressive unfolding. Some convictions antedate others, as being their conditions, and making the mind ready for them. The individual, the nation, the race, require to be thoroughly schooled under one type of discipline before they can profitably take up a succeeding one. The training of the human family presents, in extended treatment, the same order of growth which the individuals of each generation pursue up to the then existing point of race-development. What has been done by any considerable number of the race has been done for all its individuals, and these easily reach the front rank in truth, unable as they may be to pass beyond it. Justice, law, stern omnipresent order, are the ideas on which the conception of holiness rests. Not till the wide-spread, imperative force of spiritual principles is felt can the excellence of obedience, expressed in the word righteousness, be apprehended. Large experience, patient drill, severe suffering are requisite for implanting, even in a limited way, this conception of law. To spiritual training is added later a scientific definition of physical law, till these foundations of order are sunk deeply and broadly in human thought, and a corresponding elevation and beauty are imparted to holiness, the

structure of character, that rises freely and faithfully from them.

Love as a supreme spiritual endowment can only follow after the idea of righteousness. If it were introduced earlier, it would degenerate into good-natured indifference, a dull perception often falling short of the radical and constant distinction between good and evil, and foolish affections spreading quite beyond the limits of wisdom. Love as a divine attribute, a pure affection, must be preceded by a calm discernment of spiritual order, and an unflinching adhesion to it as the only sufficient safeguard of happiness.

That there have been progressive stages in Revelation, corresponding to this growth in the mind of man, and this interdependence of truth, is plain. An illustration is offered by the divine character as unfolded in the Scriptures. When God communed with Abraham, he is represented as in a measure ignorant of the events transpiring on the earth. "And the Lord said because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which is come unto me; and if not I will know." In the same conference the yearning compassion springs up as entreaty from Abraham, as if mercy were on this side rather than on that, "Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once. Peradventure ten shall be found there?"

A representation of this character would scarcely be possible in the New Testament, while the New Testament conception, as transcending the thoughts and so the wants of the Patriarch, would be equally misplaced in this narrative. In a kindred way is the character of God regarded by Moses. "Furthermore the Lord was angry with me for

your sakes, and swear that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land.”* Again, “Furthermore the Lord spake unto me saying, I have seen this people and behold it is a stiff-necked people. Let me alone that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven ; and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they.”† This reference of oaths to God in the Old Testament finds, as an act of accommodation, its explanation in the epistle to the Hebrews. “For men verily swear by the greater ; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.”

We see how fully David appropriates the love of God to himself, yet, in spite of his reverence, with some distortion of our Heavenly Father from his equal affection and common fatherhood to the race of men. “Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight ; my goodness and my fortress ; my high tower and my deliverer ; my shield and he in whom I trust ; who subdueth my people under me.”‡ This cleaving of the soul to God in its own daily activities is indeed most healthy, and chiefly healthy because it helps to cleanse those activities, and bring into our own life the divine life. Yet if we look at the way in which David sometimes waged war, and ruled his subjects, we should be slow to commit the grace and justice of Heaven so unreservedly to his deeds, to believe that his bloody hands received all their cunning from on high. The attitude of David is devout and just, but it subjects the character of God somewhat to his own character, and confirms his anger by the anger of the Most High.

* Deut. iv. 21.

† Deut. ix. 13.

‡ Ps. 144.

God, as primarily the God of the Israelites, is present to the mind of the prophet Isaiah, as to the other prophets, in a spirit quite too narrow and passionate for an exhaustive statement. "In this mountain shall the house of the Lord rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dung-hill."* "The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams : for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea."† "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war ; he shall cry, yea, roar ; he shall prevail against his enemies."‡ In these as in many other passages it is evident that the overshadowing sentiment is that of justice, retribution ; and one tinctured with national traits and interests. The prophet evidently does not hold fast to the conception of a spiritual discipline simply that is to accrue to the benefit of the whole world. The portentous aspect which divine providences were assuming, expressing as it did a portion of God's character, was keenly felt, sharply rendered, and boldly uttered ; yet on its narrow national side, under the spirit and temper of the times. How could it have been rendered otherwise, or otherwise rendered, have been profitable ?

When we pass to the New Testament, these limitations of a national worship and deity disappear. Neither are justice and judgment any longer the great work of God. Our Father which art in Heaven becomes the form of universal address. "Take no thought saying, What shall we eat ? or, What shall we drink ? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed ? for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."§ "Are not two sparrows sold

* Isa. xxv, 10.

† Isa. xxxiv, 6.

‡ Ibid. xlii, 13.

§ Matt. vi, 31, 32.

for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”* “The Lord is not slack concerning his promises as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”† “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”‡ This great advance in the conception of God, unmistakable as it is, is not fully expressed in these detached passages, but is wrought as a change of spirit into the two dispensations, one so profound as to issue almost inevitably, notwithstanding that it lay in the line of progress, in a conflict between them. On what did this transformation of ends and methods rest? Certainly not in a change in God, but in man’s knowledge of him. It is a growth in the central conceptions of religion, a gathering up of the lower in the higher, a falling of secondary attributes into the shadow of a supreme purpose, and a new light of Revelation fitted to this advancing truth. There is no reason to think this progress is at an end; quite the reverse. The Divine Character is not exhausted, nor growth on our part complete; correspondingly glad conceptions are in reserve for us.

It would seem as if all stereotyped expression were carefully avoided in the Scripture, or rather that the truth is never sheltered in expression from the force of changing circumstances. The commandments at the second rendering are not quite what they are at the first; nor yet the Lord’s prayer; while the beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount are greatly changed. This emphasizes the spirit of truth, while dealing very lightly with its letter, and looks to those changing, growing visions in which lies its power.

* Matt. x. 29.

† 2. Pet. iii. 9.

‡ 1 John iv, 16.

We have glanced at an evolution of doctrine in one direction, the implanting of seed-truth and its steady development from generation to generation ; there is corresponding progress in other directions. The doctrines of the New Testament are every way broader than those of the Old Testament. Out of modified, enlarged character, are seen to spring up enlarged relations. God assumes toward us new attitudes. In Christ, he becomes our counsellor and friend, in the Holy Spirit, an omnipresent, vivifying, spiritual presence. He ceases to stand apart as a ruler, and draws near to renew by his love a temper of obedience and wisdom. He becomes the recreative heat and light of his spiritual realm. The hopes and aims of men are proportionately broadened. The doctrine of immortality is definitely enforced, and what is more, the plan of life is made constantly to include it. We need not dwell on this ; the Bible language plainly covers this progress. The second covenant is a new covenant. "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." * Paul speaks of "the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest."† Christ likens the new truth to the new wine which must be received in a new bottle. What fact is more pregnant than this in exegesis, that one presentation grows old and makes way for another, that truth is resown in the present rather than transplanted from the past.

There is in discipline an accompanying and corresponding development to this in doctrine ; indeed there can not be growth in one without growth in the other. The training of the Israelites was national more than individual, exterior and ritualistic rather than interior and spir-

* He. viii. 13.

† Rom. xvi. 25.

itual, by visible and interested motives more than by invisible and disinterested ones, with unbending and explicit command in the place of wise counsel and wide liberty, and by the constant mediation of a priesthood and local service instead of direct personal communion, at all times and in all places. The discipline of the Israelites was collective, formal, mediate, authoritative, and in motives temporal and restricted. The spiritual light back of this training was indeed constantly breaking through, but such was its cold, sterile aspect to the sluggish, common mind. Yet religion and the religious nature can nourish themselves by their own impulses in every stage of society. It is here as it is in government. When the conditions of order are deeply planted in the popular mind, then free institutions are possible and fit, but when rule can neither be wisely established nor firmly maintained except by external authority, then this authority becomes necessary. If the minds of men are so generally and so thoroughly possessed by religious truth as to come freely and easily under its guidance, religion can commit itself to the individual mind and conscience ; but if ignorance, mingled idolatry and irreligion, are prevalent, the solution of the problem of progress must be taken from the many, incompetent to deal with it, and be committed to the few, for the establishment of a uniform national discipline. Questions of religious order thus fall into the hands of a permanent priesthood, and an authoritative method prepares the way for a voluntary one. Only thus is there any faith, law or discipline. A national religion, wholesome and salutary, is possible under conditions far too low to admit of individual responsibility or liberty. A national religion must be administered by a priesthood, must be enforced by immediate, cogent motives, and put in affinity and mutual support with existing social and

political institutions. For such a school the Israelites were ready, and not for one higher. But a national religion is necessarily one of rites, in its outstanding features exclusively one of rites. A priesthood can reach the people only through the forms of actions. The spirit and power of religion are beyond their cognizance, and beyond the capacity of the average mind in the low condition now indicated. To intrust a pagan temper with moral duties, or to charge it with spiritual affections, is impossible. These require thought, insight, impulses in a measure subject to the truth, and delighting in it. The Israelites could have made nothing of evangelization, good-will, philanthropy. Just and tender sentiments must first be enforced upon them in connection with a ritual, which put religion in a crass, palpable form before them, and gave them something to do commensurate with their powers. This, their purifications, sacrifices, feasts, temple-service did for them. These became the frame-work of a religious discipline, took active possession of their lives, taught them protracted and precise obedience, incidentally disclosed to them the attributes of God, and gave occasion for national sympathy and enlarged kindness. The ritual of the Israelites as enclosing them, setting them apart to a peculiar training, laying duties upon them, subjecting them to religious impulses, and disclosing to them first faintly, then more clearly, the unity, purity and searching government of God, justifies itself as a transitional portion of a progressive Revelation. How thoroughly it did its work, is shown in the way in which the unity and sovereignty of God were impressed on the Semitic mind, and by it on the civilization of the world. This first point was made, and so made that it became the sufficient source of a much higher, freer, more spiritual unfolding of truth. Since the time of Christ, as darkness has reigned, dogma,

rite, authority have been uppermost in the church, and advantageously so. As the grounds of freedom have been won in intelligence, these have given way, and the individual has wrought for himself according to his power. It is not unfortunate that liberty must be won by valor, since wisdom and courage are the conditions of its maintenance. Liberty is a dangerous thing to *give*.

Christianity, in its full development, admits no third party. It leaves each soul with its Maker, to live by the immediate ministrations of Heaven, and to enlarge its life under them. The words of Moses are grand words, but they are not the words of Christ, "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?"* The first part of the requisition would have had but little value for Israel without the remainder. Commandments largely ceremonial were, with them, the girding, guiding lines of character. Christ leaves us with the simple living force implied in the principle, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself."† Here is a spirit which searches and guides every rational mind, no matter what its orbit.

There is indicated in the Bible narrative a corresponding progress in practical morality. The duplicity of Jacob came to him and passed through him in the line of inheritance. The struggles of David, in which he suffered such signal defeats, were those of his generation, a generation deeply sunk in appetite and passion. Paul, on the other hand, is wholly possessed by one devout and zealous im-

* De. x, 12, 13.

† Luke x. 27.

pulse ; while John is lifted by unfailing affection. Contrast David and Paul, both men of action ; of deep emotions, large purposes and great resources ; both men of devout belief and spiritual insight, and we can not fail to see, that while they are baptized into one faith, it is with a wide diversity of service and spirit ; that the conquering strength of Jehovah is passing into the winning love of Christ. Polygamy, slavery, the subjection of women, every social sin, one after another, must inevitably fall off from this expanding faith, this truth finding every day new, more living and more tender ministrations. The church is, in its progress, its only example to itself. The prophets hastened on their mission, breathing into the Jewish ritual a deeper, more comprehensive, holier spirit. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen ? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke ?" * The true prophets of Christ are to-day under a like inspiration modified by the good and the evil about them.

A fifth very subtle, but very important, principle of interpretation is that involved in the words of Paul : "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." A quick insight into the spirit of an assertion, and a relatively light estimate of its form or letter, a power to look in the direction in which the speaker or writer was himself looking, to catch with him the formation of the thought, as it proceeded before his mind, and to apprehend easily the limitations and limping utterance which language, as exact expression, was liable to put upon it, are essentials of instructive, stimulating exegesis, and this the more as we approach the most significant portions of Scripture, the words of our Lord. These, while they unite themselves closely to an occasion, are ever opening out into principles

* Is. lviii, 6.

broader than it. Through the vista offered by the events, as through the rift of clouds into the blue beyond, are lines of vision into the high, calm regions of eternal truth. These searching principles are often given by Christ as daring figures, bold contradictions, and a wresting of speech from familiar and conventional service to one strange and transcendent. This spiritual insight, consisting in sympathy with the position and outlook of the writer, is allied to that literary spirit, in its highest, best form, insisted on by Matthew Arnold. A comprehensive grasp of a single truth can only be reached by a knowledge of many truths. For this reason Christ seems often to have simply pronounced principles of action, and then to have left them unsupported, unexplained and unapplied. Adequate support, explanation and application were impossible. These truths were left, and of necessity left, for the mind to return to again and again under its enlarged experiences. They were allowed in simple magnitude to hold possession of the spiritual horizon, like great mountains, bringing their sublime and varying lessons as shifting lights and the spirit of beholders should give them opportunity.

“To understand that the language of the Bible is fluid, passing and literary, not rigid, fixed and scientific, is the first step toward a right understanding of the Bible. But to take this very first step, some experience of how men have thought and expressed themselves, and some flexibility of spirit is necessary, and this is culture.”* It may be thought that the fruits of this form of criticism, as exemplified by Arnold, are not such as to commend it. On the contrary, this spirit seems to us to constitute his chief power, and to impart to him at times marvellous penetration, a penetration the value of whose results is

* Literature and Dogma, Preface, p. 12.

impaired only by a deficiency in another equally important condition of interpretation, a sound philosophy. His weakness lies, as it is wont to with all of us, in what he despises, and his strength in what he highly esteems and patiently acquires, the power to leave one's own position and to draw near to that of an author.

This principle of literary criticism, of an interior widening of the idea of a writer not under his language, but under his controlling conception, renders misleading and nugatory, the system of textual proofs. This system ascribes to the language of the Scriptures a precise meaning, and to isolated passages formulated truth, which do not often belong to them. They are as frequently directions of thought as sections of thought. They require the observer to take a certain position that he may look along them, through them ; and will not suffer him from any and every position to look at them, as ground-plans of truth of definite proportions and complete measurements, to be taken off by dividers and reapplied by measuring rods. The textual method, as a method, is unsafe, and to be narrowly watched over in every one of its uses.

These are the leading facts of which a vigorous and safe exegesis is to possess itself, the facts of our own nature, of philosophy ; the variable facts of history and national character ; the facts of evolution in human thought and sentiment, with the complementary fact of a progressive revelation ; and the fact, that in all profound spiritual truths, the mind struggles with them, striving to penetrate them beyond the occasion and the language at hand. If there is to be given in interpretation to these facts, we will not say the exact weight we have assigned them, but any sufficient weight, then it is plainly possible, nay it must have been contemplated from the beginning, that one race one period, one class of minds should take

a partial, an inadequate view of truth, and that other races, periods, and persons, working beyond these first impressions by means of them, should give to the truth a deeper and more spiritual rendering. In other words, religious statements are not absolute, exhaustive for all times and persons, but offer a series of dissolving views, each succeeding one in the line of preceding ones, but more suggestive, more brilliant, more consoling than they. Our spiritual nature grows, and it grows by shifting conceptions, conceptions which are the last statement, but not the final utterance, of truth. There is in this no mystery beyond that of growth; if there is growth, then there is this change of intellectual elements incident to it.

Many illustrations offer themselves of this modification of belief. Punishments in the divine government are wont to be regarded at the outset as direct, physical inflictions, associated with the sins which they correct by arbitrary appointment, and constituting the chief deterrents to transgression. They come later to be looked on as largely spiritual, as enclosed in man's ethical and physical constitution, as certain slowly to develop themselves under the laws which rule in man and in the world, and as adding themselves to positive inflictions as far greater persuasives to obedience. We do not consider what limits should be put to this tendency; the tendency itself is undeniable, and as undeniably an elevating one. The government of God, under the one impression, rests down as a foreign authority upon man, and calls in retributive agents to coerce him; under the other, it is deeply rooted in his nature, and proceeds by his own constitutional forces to establish itself, and complete its rewards and penalties. The authority of God is thus set up within the soul itself, is involved in every act of life, unfolding itself as its rational, constructive law. This conception, however, is

alien to the uninstructed mind, and finds its way into the thoughts step by step as they enlarge themselves. The language of our Saviour concerning retribution takes either light. It presses down on the sensual mind under its sensual imagery as enduring torment, and it comes to the spiritual mind with a spiritual tenor, consonant with its own states. The flames are not the flames which fiends are kindling, but those which the desires and passions are feeding. The fact of punishment does not change, but its forms are modified, suiting themselves to the mind which contemplates them.

This flexibility is in the Bible language. No details of punishment are given, the words are vague, figurative, suggestive, and while they deliver faithfully to all their warning, they leave them to render it into such specific inflictions as they find in the forecast of their own experience. "He is the wise man who sees at once that all is image, prejudice, symbol, and that the image, the prejudice, the symbol are necessary, useful and true."*

Another illustration of variable truth is offered by the words of Christ in which he established the Lord's Supper. We know how the emphatic declaration, "This is my body," has been a stumbling-stone to many, and led to most perplexed and irrational interpretation. One mind through original constitution or protracted misdirection can not wing its way lightly over the words to their spiritual purpose, while another, of easier poise, finds in them no obstruction. The apprehension of the manner in which Christ is present in the emblems of sacrifice must, in each instance, turn on the sympathies, the intellectual tendencies, of the soul. Those who have the largest reserve of spiritual suggestions will be least inclined to admit a mysterious transformation and supernatural presence.

* Religious History and Criticism, p. 392.

Take this language of Christ and trace the history of the doctrine of this sacrament, and we shall see how impossible it is for a sluggish or sensual temper, or one strongly biased by an established tendency, to escape the danger of approaching this sacrament with ill-defined reverence and fear, and expecting from it physical rather than purely spiritual results. The words of Christ allow this misconstruction, while they freely submit themselves to every breath of spiritual expansion.

Again, God is said, as in Isaiah, to have created his servants for his glory. Each mind must necessarily give this language the force which for it attaches to the word, *glory*. If glory is found in holding, using, subjecting men, then for this purpose has God shaped them. If glory accrues to God from their free, self-guided, intelligent action, then God has framed them for this end. The feeble spirit can not mount by the conceptions of the stronger one, nor the stronger be held down by the burdens of the feebler. Each walks, or runs, or flies on eagle's wing, as it is given to him to do by his own powers. When Christ told the twelve apostles that they should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, what inadequate physical conceptions of coming honor took possession of their imaginations. Large, fruitful interpretation involves as its condition growing powers, ripening experiences, corrected sympathies, trained insight. 'He that doeth my will shall know of the doctrine.' It is impossible that truths which contain so large an emotional element as do many of those that pertain to religion, should disclose themselves otherwise than slowly, with the reservations and limitations which the poverty of the individual heart imposes on them. Hence also no class of truths expand more rapidly under the clear, sympathetic eye than these truths. In reference to none do we feel surer that it was

in this general direction, along this ascending way of light, that the thoughts and feelings of the writer were mounting. "Criticism may and must determine what the original speakers seem to have directly meant, but the very nature of their language justifies *any* powerful and fruitful application of it, and every such application may be said, in the words of popular religion, to have been lodged there from the first by the spirit of God."*

The advantages of this bold, earnest, penetrative interpretation are manifold; they are like those which belong to the acceptance of an inspiration such as is indicated by the facts before us. It of all exegesis elicits inquiry, demands sincerity, flows out of and leads to intellectual and spiritual growth. We are left to ourselves, put to proof, as to the use we are disposed to make of truth when it has been announced to us, why should we not also be put to the same proof in the use of our powers in obtaining the truth? It is enough that approximate truth is within our reach. The conditions of discipline are thus fully met. Under any circumstances each mind must settle for itself the authority of authority, the claims of the most clamorous dogma. Does not this ultimate reference of certainty to itself look to a trust, on the part of the mind, in its own powers, and a diligent use in all times and places of its own resources?

If this is the type of Revelation, if this, as we believe it to be, is the cost of Scriptural truth, that truth, in its mode of presentation, is most analogous to the truths of nature, is most deeply imbedded in them, and is engaged with them, on the simplest terms of fellowship, in one joint kingdom. We attach the highest importance to this concurrence of the instruction of the Bible with the training to which man is subjected in his physical, social, his-

* Literature and Dogma, p. 97.

torical relations. In these are the permanent conditions of growth, and the transient, auxiliary, supernatural ones unite easily with them, and subserve their purposes readily under an agreement of method. If, on the one side, faith is authoritative, and help a simple gift, while, on the other, wise belief is the product of patient inquiry, and success is conditioned on skill and labor, the lessons which the one school enforces the other disparages, and man is left to vibrate between the religious and the practical, the trusting and the speculative impulse, with small prospect of reconciling them, and uniting them in a harmonious life. The primary, the permanent instruction of man, as manifestly provided by Heaven as that of Inspiration, is that of nature ; and an exegesis which gives free play to all the forces involved, which carries forward natural into revealed theology, stands united with these initial terms of growth, starts at the beginning and so is ready to proceed to the end.

This view also makes man a more complete party to the Kingdom of Heaven. It seems to some a gain to disparage man, to exclude him from control, to remand him decisively to the position of a servant, to gather up all power in the divine will, itself unchallenged. To these persons a spirit of inquiry, of concurrence and co-labor has but little to commend it. Yet it is certain that the world matures the strength of man, and wins for him moral beauty only so far and so rapidly as he is trained to devise and to execute the wise and good thing. The excellence of his constitution is found not in what can be done for him, but in what he can be led to do. This is a fact as emphatic in the moral, as in the physical or intellectual world. Nothing is more incommunicable than virtue, nothing more personal, more of the nature of individual power. In no acts more than in acts of holiness does God include his

will in the will of man. A schooling that is from the beginning one of growing insight, enlarged freedom and creative power, stands in closest contact with the generous, invigorating, cherishing love of God. We are thus properly heirs of the kingdom, and joint-heirs with Christ.

Interpretation of the kind now urged makes difficulties and errors light, and takes from them the power to injure. They are in religion as in science things of course, and open to easy correction. They only work a passing mischief, and even for that bring a compensation in the enlarged experience which eliminates them. The natural, the human element bears off the mistake, and leaves the supernatural, the divine element unimpeached. Our hasty judgments are not passed back to us certified under the seal of Heaven.

It will naturally enough start up as an objection, that if philosophic history, literary criticism must underlie exegesis, the uneducated mind abides under great discouragements in its approach to God's word. It certainly does, if, as unexpanded and unspiritualized, it looks for an exhaustive comprehension of the truth, to possess itself of it at once and fully. If, however, it more modestly and more wisely asks for something just at hand commensurate with its wants, nothing is more varied and flexible in adaptation than the Word of God. Its slow historic growth, its repeated submission to natural conditions of the most primary character, fit it to lay an immediate hold on every grade of culture. The fact that it lets fall lessons so easily, of so many kinds; that it is so possible to be known in part and understood in part, adapts it for immediate and humble service. The uncultivated mind, moreover, if honest, may have its advantages. It may be grounded in a practical, working view of human nature, in a true philosophy, in a sense of power and responsibility, and perchance also of guilt and of want. It is purely a problem

of conduct, of encouragement, that it brings to the Bible, and nothing can be clearer than the preceptive and sympathetic side of Revelation. It is no unreasonable bar to a free and successful approach to the wisdom of the Word, that it makes best answer to one well-grounded in all coincident truths of history and human nature, to one whose experience has helped to teach him the evils to be removed, and the methods of their removal.

It will as easily be objected, that we must, if each man is left to his own exegesis, encounter at once the endless disasters and divisions of erroneous criticism. Certainly, there are dangers in meeting the conditions of growth ; we do not therefore turn aside from growth. Have no divisions and disasters attended on authority? Has not rather the scrupulous, syllabic weighing out of words occasioned as bitter, as blind, as bigoted divisions as can in any possible way be called forth? as cold, as formal, as worthless unions as may by any method be reached? The mistakes of growth, of a sincere spirit, find instant compensation and slow correction ; the mistakes of authority are from the beginning unfortunate, and become more so every moment. God accepts the liabilities of freedom, it is our wisdom to accept them also, and under them to lay the foundations of prosperity. There will be a permanence and strength in the structure so created, tested and confirmed by experience in every part, not otherwise attainable.

Divisions are unduly alarming to us, as if men must needs huddle together in fear or in faith before there can be any common safety ; as if the blind belief of one helped to insure another, and danger was found only in solitude. It is hostility not diversity that is morally destructive, and the ease with which we admit the first, in an effort to exclude the second, is most irrational. There is nothing which pertains more exclusively to the privacy and idio-

sympathy of the person than belief. In it the mind must be let alone, must be left to its measurements and insights. With our beliefs others can have only an indirect concern. It is not till they affect character, and strike out in conduct, that they directly interest our neighbors. We constantly underestimate character and overestimate belief; when the former is the chief significance of the latter. Unity of belief is hardly an occasion of sympathy, till belief tinges feeling, measures hopes, directs efforts. Mathematical truths, though they lie with absolute coincidence in different minds, enkindle no common affections. Action, emotion, on the other hand, instantly interest our neighbor. A concurrence of purposes calls for a concurrence of feelings, and would give the grounds of it in religion, did we not check coalescence by attaching a false value to doctrine, and so making its dissemination a primary part of our effort. No man can predict what character will follow from a particular creed, because he can not say what portions of it will be made nutritive, how logically its tendencies will be followed out, how much depth of conviction will be implied in an assent to it, nor at what points it will find arrest or modification by counter-tendencies. The real sympathetic grounds of union are thus not arrived at by a constrained unity of faith. The Scriptures are especially remarkable for dealing with facts and precepts, and rendering these spiritually operative under many diverse shades of doctrine. This unity of life is lost by a perpetual resolution of every truth into exact formulæ addressed to the intellect, instead of into impulses addressed to the affections. The intellect is unyielding and proceeds by difference and division, the emotions are concessive, and made strong by coalescence. The grounds of fellowship are not, nor can be, on that side but on this. The purposes to which we put truth, the

honesty with which we seek it, the diligence with which we obey it, are the grounds of union. Likeness of results is pleasing primarily because of the confirmation it brings to our practical life. No agreement in theory can compare, as a bond of concord, with a strong attachment to the truth, and a disposition honestly to use it. No mind is to forego its own conclusions, but it is to recognize the fact that the value of these conclusions lies not in them, but in their power to minister to the mind that has fearlessly arrived at them, and honestly uses them. We must recognize the independence of belief, its necessary diversities, its secondary value, its variable connection with character, and the supreme claim it sets up for freedom. In this recognition there is a better ground of union in sentiment than in any formulated truths whatever. If we could hold intellectual union more lightly, and cease to seek for it, we should find emotional union more readily. Harmony will sometimes best come to us when we have forgotten to pursue it. We insist on the truth because of what the truth can *do*; we would not therefore destroy its power to work in the way in which we get it. If we would have it free when won, we must leave it free in the winning.



CHAPTER XII.

Primitive Facts. Sin and Divine Law.

IT was not because the conditions of man's physical being, or even of his intellectual being, were not complete, that Revelation came to him, but to call out and train his spiritual powers. These powers are awakened by supersensible ideas, and to impart to these ideas suffi-

cient reality and cogency, and that too in the presence of overpowering, bewildering, misleading sensible impressions ; to enable them to win their proper control, is the office of religion, of Revelation, as a historic force. Fundamental among these spiritual conceptions which are to be brought by a spiritual discipline into the foreground, and made to rule the soul by its own conviction concerning them, are the moral law, sin as disobedience to it, righteousness as obedience to it. The development in the mind of a truly spiritual law as the grounds of a spiritual life, accompanied with an increasing insight into its breadth of application, into the spiritual forces, and ultimately therefore the intellectual and physical forces, that concur to sustain it, is the moral, the religious discipline of the race. When this insight is sustained by the affections, and these are present in sufficient power to take easy possession of the will, and thus cause our higher life to proceed freely and joyfully under its inner, its divine law, the soul is sanctified, made holy ; conduct and character are righteous.

The training is twofold, the inner law is to be seen in its universality of application and its motives are at the same time to be rendered efficacious. These two phases of growth proceed together. Experience will call out and confirm the moral affections, and at the same time by fresh insight disclose new fields for them. Meaning by the moral affections the feelings as drawn out under the invisible, moral relations of our life, we shall be holy in the degree in which they carry our action into all the directions open to it, and freely control it there ; in the degree in which they lay hold of conduct, and build it up under their formative forces as character, as a spiritual product, shaped throughout to the subtle conceptions of

righteousness. Two things are involved, a universal law of action, spiritual incentives to sustain it.

It may be thought that these incentives are not altogether invisible. They doubtless inhere more or less in visible things, but as ultimate, ethical motives they are purely spiritual. The prosperity and good-fellowship which may attend on righteousness are not, in their gross, sensible qualities, its motives, they are only the kindly incidents of a level of life that always lies above them; the things that come to the mind the more easily because it can so easily dispense with them, the enjoyments that pursue us when we have ceased to pursue them.

We accept, as the highest unfolding of the law of our spiritual being, the words of Christ; "Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it." Life is to be found in oversight of the sensible allurements that draw it quickly outward, and in imposing upon it within itself its own motives. This lifting the life of man from a servitude to sensible, appetitive impulses into its own invisible realm of spiritual incentives, and, at length, sending it forth thence so furnished with renewed powers as to take possession of the physical and social worlds in its own interests, in its own behoof, this is the province of Revelation, this the historic work of religion. Thus shall the meek inherit the earth.

Of this movement, this religious development, there are three conditions. It must take place under incentives that are primarily personal. We state this thus distinctly in part because of the clearness with which Matthew Arnold has developed the bearings of religion on conduct, and yet referred them to impersonal forces, those forces in the "not-ourselves which make for righteousness." We grant that as this growth of our spiritual perceptions passes onward we are more and more impressed with the permeating

power of righteousness, its pervasive control of results, its instant, constant hold on the universe. This is a consequence of the coveted religious training. God is seen to be acting through nature rather than on it. Things lose their indocility, their inflexibility, their physical estrangement to spiritual issues: they begin to make for righteousness, they flow together with startling sympathy, hastening on the rebukes of sin, or spreading far and wide the sunshine and smiles that attend on virtue, virtue that is so enlarged and firm as to be found entering on its inheritance. But even then nature is not the personality of God merged in cold, dead, material facts, it is coherent activity suffused with the wisdom and love of our Father, taken up into the fellowship of his omnipresent thought and power.

That the idea of personality, as applied to the Eternal, is peculiarly vague and unverifiable we can not admit. Unverifiableness in ideas turns chiefly on the unfamiliarity of the mind with them, and on their complexity. Certainly no idea is more intimate to our very being, more within the scope of our experience, than this of personality. Complex it certainly is, but its central conditions are plain, and we need not, for its wise and safe and stimulating use, exhaust it in all its bearings. It is for some minds at least far easier to entertain the thought of a system of things that makes for righteousness through the kindly, controlling purpose of Him who frames it, than of a system of things that makes in a blind, dead way for rational, living ends; that evolves aid, fellowship, virtue, with no apprehension of any of them; that has the issues without the attributes of thought. "It shows great ignorance of human nature, and of God's modes of operation, to suppose that he would approach a darkened, sensual world by purely spiritual, abstract teaching." *

* W. E. Channing, *Life of*, vol. 2, p. 444.

Moreover, it is such spiritual ideas, such invisible forces, as those which we refer to God in the world, that are to be developed, made clear, verifiable, living in our experience by the discipline of religion. For this very end religion comes to us, to emphasize the personal, to enable us to lay hold of the unseen and intangible, and render it, by a spiritual use and appropriation, into manifest, verifiable results. In any way to evade this issue is to foreclose growth. The development of our moral nature must proceed under personal incentives, by contact with laws that, in their ordination as in their application, are personal, carry with them and have back of them choice, emotion. Virtue springs from all that is high, spiritual, personal in the soul, and can only be sympathetically kindled by like attributes in the world about it. A mere mechanism, no matter what the skill of its contrivance, has no hold on the affections. Whether, in its operation, it does good or does evil is immaterial, if there is no purpose, no feeling, expressed either by the one action or the other. It may impose on us new conditions of action, it may make new exertion necessary, or promise unexpected opportunities, but these alike resolve themselves into cold, formal grounds of activity, and do not in the least touch the spirit. If the whole universe is to be looked on as such a mechanism, then it, in equal measure, loses its hold on the affections. If its laws make for righteousness, they can still bring to righteousness no other or higher incentive than prudence. They call out no enthusiasm; they can not meet thought with thought, affection with affection, aspiration with that sympathetic aid that carries it forward to fulfillment. "For, except in this conviction, the first and simplest, on which we have ever to fall back from more artificial and complicated theories — God is, and God is Love. I can see nothing in this life but a hideous, waste, howling wilder-

ness, with siroccos and sand-pillars, overwhelming everything and scorching up everything.”*

If this is true of the clear-minded and high-minded, that, as spiritual beings, they move freely only under the condition of living powers in contact with kindred living impulses, the reason nourished by holiness,—the rational action of one who is holy—much more is it true of those sluggish in thought and groveling in tendencies, that nothing short of direct contact with personal authority, enjoining and forbidding, rewarding and punishing, awakening the attention and filling the ear with words of encouragement and admonition, can avail for the ends of discipline. The personal yields to the personal as it will yield to nothing else. It stands in awe of it as of nothing else; and the sense of authority, of rightfulness, of guidance, is for it gathered up in persons. To persons it is wont to submit, to the impersonal it unconsciously and unceasingly asserts its superiority.

As virtue comes from that which is preëminently the seat of personality, it calls for the personal, whether it is to grow by sympathetic contact, or to be impelled forward by law. Training is made up of two parts, the enlarged and enlarging laws which embrace conduct, and the correspondingly pervasive spiritual emotions which are to sustain and enforce these laws, and carry obedience forward into pleasure. These steps must be taken together; when the satisfaction in law falls off, the sense of law will cease to expand; while each law of conduct, accepted and rejoiced in, will lead to other more remote, more subtle lines of action. That element, therefore, of discipline which makes the law an emotional force, a power working its own way in the affections, is absolutely essential to development. We cease to see when we cease to feel.

* Life and Letters of F. W. Robertson, vol. 2, p. 84.

The personal element thus becomes that sympathetic, glowing, growing force which, under the law, like begets like, works on the rational life of the soul, and calls it out in clearer seeing and deeper feeling, in deeper feeling and clearer seeing.

"Faith," says Arnold, "is the being able to cleave to a power of goodness appealing to our higher and real self, not to our lower and apparent self."* This definition certainly lies in the right direction, but what power but a personal power, one comprehensive of, appreciative of, goodness, can appeal to our higher and real self. An appeal is an effort to evoke sympathy, and the 'not-ourselves,' as a dead material force, can make no such effort. A statue can not appeal to our love no matter how finely chiseled. We can not cast ourselves upon it, we can not cling to it. The cold marble repels us, chills us; or convicts our tenderness of folly. There is no more universal law than this, that the cause must be commensurate with the effect, the forces which beget righteousness must be righteous; the forces which stimulate and develop persons must be personal.

We are carried back in a discussion like this at once to our philosophy. If righteousness is, in ultimate analysis, no enthusiasm, no irreversible law of life, but a quiet calculation by which action is shaped to its conditions, or more exactly the law under which actions are shaped by its conditions into a certain coincidence with them, then, losing liberty, right and personality in ourselves, there is no reason why we should insist on them as facts of our so called training, as elements of our spiritual environment. Results one in kind, one in the law that controls them, with those of the material world, can easily enough be developed by material forces. We have, however, used a wonderfully

* Literature and Dogma, p. 204.

high-sounding, resonant and deceptive phraseology in speaking of such a development as holiness, righteousness, religion.

If we lose personality on the one side we begin to lose it instantly on the other ; if the powers in the world which make for righteousness, are impersonal, righteousness itself misses its character, sinks into calculation, becomes a cunning, or if you please, a wise, adaptation of conduct to passing events. Add to this instant degeneracy of aim, by which we substitute an external comfort and relation for an internal state and law, the limitation in time, the loss of immortality, incident to it,—for on this point impersonal forces can give us no assurance, make us no promises—and our entire spiritual life is at once narrowed down to adjustments of a kind with those which fit the bird to its habitat, the beast to its forest range. Losing our hopes of a future life, we are either humbled to the fortunes of this life, or, still kindling our spirits to purposes of grander scope, we are overtaken with ineffable sadness that we have no sufficient promise of their fulfillment.

Revelation, always involving a supernatural element, must proceed on the idea of a Divine Person. The Scriptures are saturated with it. Prophets and apostles would without it become speculators, moralists, reformers ; would drop apart into the incoherence and conflict incident to human thought. The unity, the progress of purpose in the Bible, are due to the supernatural element, the revelation of God, which combines and carries forward with it the natural agents set in motion by it. There is thus disclosed a Power working out one purpose from the beginning to the end, raising up and using for its own objects its successive instruments, without either destroying their character, or losing sight of its own plans. The natural is taken up into the supernatural, and the two into the king-

dom of God. The power which makes of the Scriptures a series of Revelations, giving rise to a corresponding momentous series of historical events, is the personal power which every partaker in these writings has found in God. One conception has ruled all alike, and given to them their message. If they had had to do with impersonal, natural forces merely, if they had missed the supernatural, their works would have fallen asunder like those of philosophy, they would have lost popular power, and commanded but a divided attention with the few. Rightly or wrongly, the Scriptures are what they are by virtue of the personal and supernatural.

A second condition of religious development, deepening the impressions of ethical law, and transforming them into those of religious law by virtue of our spiritual affections, is, that it must be general, including the race. Race-development can alone compass any great movement; it alone has an orbit large enough to gather up and carry on multiplied, protracted, accumulated influences, to give complex truths their manifold expression, to bear them forward in action and from that action to come back to their fresh elucidation. There is something strange and subtile in the ease with which the individual appropriates what the race has won, when contrasted with his inability materially to transcend it. Here is the secret of civilization. A barbarous race may, in a few generations, come up well along side of those who have taught them, crowding centuries into years, but having done this, it then pursues the unexplored path of farther progress on the slow, hard conditions which fall to the pioneers of men. If a single race is intractable, unwilling to yield, or unable to yield, to the humanizing agencies that overtake it, these in turn become hostile, and rapidly destroy it.

The ideas that are wrought into individual life, social

life, national life, that appear in exalted types of conduct, are slowly accumulated by race-experiences. The idea of one supreme God was the lesson which the Israelites acquired by the varying but continuous discipline of many generations. The new truth is slowly consolidated into national character, national institutions, and so expressed has a firmness, a momentum, which make it rapidly and broadly effective. Thus Grecian art, and Roman law, as race-achievements, things done, have reappeared in European history and institutions. What the individual, by superior energy of thought or of moral nature, is able to achieve, fails in efficiency as it falls off in mass. Only as it works itself into a race, verifies itself in a national life, finds entrance into institutions, and shapes society, does it, as ground gained, begin to accrue to universal progress. The individual is always inclosed as a unit in a much larger factor; he receives in overwhelming volume from men, and communicates to them slowly and with much resistance. It is first a race, then the race, that accumulates, consolidates and gives a practical, unconscious control to truths, above all to truths of character.

Religious principles preëminently seek this large, this race, development. Its beliefs, like that of immortality, are of so intangible, so unverifiable a nature, as men are pleased to call them, that the individual can get but a slipping hold upon them. They call for accumulated impression, for the traditional force which belongs to protracted and general experience, the best insight of many minds, above all for the purer and more peaceful faith which a belief in them serves itself to work out in cleansing the affections, and making truths whose medium is largely emotional, less flickering and unsteady. One measure of a strictly rational faith is possible to one spiritual state, and another to another. Grounds of belief

which are partially resolvable into trust and love must vary with love and trust, vary with the moral tone of the generation into which they have fallen. "An interlocutor in Cicero expressed what was probably a common feeling, when he acknowledged that with the writings of Plato before him, he could believe and realize immortality ; but when he closed the book, the reasonings seemed to lose their power, and the world of spirits grew pale and unreal."* So easy is it for the faith of one or two to burn dim or expire altogether in a heavy atmosphere of unbelief. There is in this fact the deepest philosophy, for the conditions of faith, the food of faith, are wanting among the vicious and skeptical. Faith must fasten itself in a sensitive way on integrity, and be nourished by its daily exercise. It is an air-plant that attaches to the thrifty limbs and trunks of sound growth only.

Religious truths must find their practical efficiency in this their victory over numbers, each life lending its strength to all about it. A larger experience, a more manifold and varied test than is possible to one alone, an extension of them in application beyond the scope of private thought are necessary to our spiritual ideas to make them truly regnant. "Religion is neither founded nor overthrown by arguments ; it has its ground of being in the most imperious needs of our nature, the need of loving, the need of suffering, the need of believing."† In other words, exact, mathematical ideas, sensible, verifiable conceptions are not the foundation of religion, but spiritual, emotional ones, that persistently return, indeed, but with changeable, vague outline ; ideas that are to be shaped, confirmed, verified by the growth of our entire nature, of man and society, under them. Only as they have ruled

* History of European Morals, vol. i, p. 191.

† Religious History and Criticism, p. 273.

are they able to show their right to rule; the proof increases every instant as the field enlarges.

Moreover these truths are of that inclusive character, this development so lies along the paths of social and national as well as individual life, that it is impossible that religious discipline shall complete itself otherwise than under the broadest race-relations. The thing to be disclosed is the universality of religious law, and the variety and breadth of the emotional impulses which sustain it. Any breaking down of religious truth between man and man is in contradiction of the office it has undertaken to discharge. Wherever the influence of man goes, or from whatever quarter influence comes to him, there must be found a new disclosure of the power of religious truth, a new unfolding of the one spiritual life.

A third condition of religious development is inheritance. For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. This law of inheritance assumes two forms, a physical and a moral one. The spiritual nurture of the household and the community transmits itself under the ordinary laws of influence in a most full and effective way. The child does not merely receive the counsel and follow the example of the parents, he is not merely born into the moral standards and under the institutions of the community, learning its emphasis; the community and the household are every hour of his life giving to him the conditions of action, its irritants and counter-irritants, its incitements and repressments. What shall be called forth in the child, and how it shall be called forth, are settled by these anticipatory circumstances that enclose him at every turn. Moral inheritance, the protracted gestation in which

every new-born spirit is held by the community, is inseparable from that race-development on which individual development turns. If the discipline and culture which accrue to the individual, are to be far wider than anything which is possible to him alone ; if they are to extend over the broadest periods, gather in the most varied powers, participate in and carry forward the most manifold interests, if they are to abolish at once and on all sides the boundaries of life, then the law of transmission must hold.

Physical inheritance is more restricted, but not less certain, than intellectual inheritance. Moral qualities are closely affiliated with physical conditions, and these find a free transfer from parent to child. That inheritance transcends these two lines of descent, a transfer of moral influences in a moral form, and of physical conditions in a physical form, can hardly be shown. Talent, turpitude, virtue, pass by descent with no more fullness or certainty than these conjoint agencies would lead us to expect. Native, that is, primitive, tendencies and powers appear freely everywhere. The talent of the parents fails to guarantee the talent of the children, and children often disclose a sudden gain of intelligence, an unexpected intensity of moral force.

A conjoint transfer of physical organization,—a condition so subtle as to carry with it many habits—and of intellectual training, accompanied as this may often be with the most stimulating opportunities, is obviously sufficient to explain most cases of transmitted talent. Instances of inherited ability are certainly not more numerous than we have a right to expect them to be. They also lie in a direction consistent with a joint reference of them to physical inheritance and intellectual training. Musical power has shown an unusual tendency to transmission, as in the family of Veit Bach. "Oftentimes more than one

hundred persons bearing the name of Bach, men, women, and children, were to be seen assembled. In this family are reckoned twenty-nine eminent musicians." * But musical power is peculiarly dependent on physical organization, and peculiarly capable, under favoring circumstances, of development. When ability of an unusual order passes from father to son, finding expression in the same line, as in statemanship in the Pitts and the Adamses, or in dramatic representation in the Colemans, we are to remember, that most favorable and vigorous influences conspire to give direction to the talents of the children.

Though these do not suffice to impart unusual ability, they do suffice, this being given, to make the transmission complete and conspicuous.

In the article by Papillon just now referred to, it is said, "On the whole, these cases of transmission of psychical qualities are not frequent. Their being so carefully noted and so set in relief is apparently due to the fact that they are not of common occurrence ; and, besides, in many of the cases education had probably more to do than heredity . . . Cases of heredity will never be, in the domain of psychology, anything more than exceptions, as compared with cases that make against heredity."

While inheritance is the law of those general forces, those social and intellectual influences, which are developed under the growth of the community as the joint products of our generic life ; while even a stricter heredity attends on the physical organization of parents, there is none the less a primitive, psychical and moral element in man which finds no such explanation. Independent, germinant points are introduced along those lines of evolution which express themselves in physical traits and social *status*. The individual is never wholly lost in the race,

* Popular Science Monthly, Nov. 1873.

dependent as he is upon it. If there were no inheritance, the fruits of voluntary effort could not be gathered ; if inheritance covered every fact of succession, voluntary effort would be excluded, and the opportunity of gain lost on that side.

Inheritance, inseparable from joint, social development, works with it to secure continuous and gigantic growth. It gives the preponderance of power to virtue in either line of transmission. As a transfer of physical qualities it makes for soundness and strength. The fittest survive. What is more, it puts under the control of man the physical organization of successive generations, and invites growth in these primary conditions of well-being. It discloses a law, lays open a possibility, enforces a duty, in the on-going of life from father to son, and thus includes in social progress another and most efficient agency, encloses another line of activity within the pale of character. It serves also to disclose in a new direction the nature of vice and virtue, the virus of the one, and the *vis vitæ* of the other. Vice, the moment it enters the physical world as intemperance, produces weakness, and transmits it. Vice thus becomes a verifiable force working death. Virtue, in the same realm, as temperance, brings health, imparts it, and makes everywhere with visible efficiency for life.

The transmission of moral persuasives tends also to virtue, since it gives its truths those long periods which are requisite for their full development, their complete enforcement. The historic test is the great test, and this is that of transmission, of doctrines unrolled for their full reading to the last syllable that is in them, institutions developed in effects to the exhaustion of their power for good or evil. We owe much to the rapid, partial logic of deduction, we owe more to the surer reasoning of events. Virtue vindicates itself better in a broad than in a narrow

field. She counter-works vice successfully only when vice is left for a long period, like a besieged city, to its own resources. It is not so much in the command of the present as in the command of the future, that right and wrong betray themselves. The momentum of the hour disguises the new forces operative on it. It is the completed orbit that fully discloses them. A sound, social principle is necessarily at disadvantage in the beginning, as it goes to work on conditions that have been made ready by alien or by hostile forces. Destruction often precedes construction, and for the time being disguises it. Time, if time is active, is busy at the demonstrations of virtue, and one by one she brings them to the light. Phases of social life, polygamy, slavery, have passed away, and can not return; phases of belief, indulgences, limited atonements, lose their hold on the minds of men, and can not regain it, for thought has drifted away from them.

Science and historic criticism also, placing from generation to generation a larger and more varied array of facts at our disposal, cause us, in many ways, to reinterpret the past and the present, and to enter more exactly into the results of conduct. Thus the great discloser of character as a controlling agency is time, time that patiently analyzes the forces that are shaping events. What the moral truths of the world have been waiting for has been more time; in the fullness of time each prophet comes, and only then can come. The law of inheritance enables virtue to take its appeal to the future against the misconceptions, perversions and undeveloped tendencies of the present, enables it to nurse the seeds of success into full-grown strength, and matches it against its adversary by the patient, living forces that are in it. The law of transmission becomes at every step more manifestly the adjunct of virtue, and the condition of its victories. The gains of righteousness are

thereby made self-perpetuating, permanent. Successive generations are born into the kingdom, being born under its improved physical conditions, and within the enlarged scope of its moral elements. The accumulated and accumulating powers of growth are made over to virtue, its stages are increasingly rational and calculable, and men and society come together into the possession of, and use of, an enlarged life. Little is given, much is won, and is, therefore, safely held by the wise thoughts under whose action it has been gained. Very little is possible by way of absolute gift in character either to man or society. Constitutions that are the slow outgrowth of experience, that have shaped their instruments and sustaining habits, and have bent circumstances to their purposes, can alone support themselves. The steps of progress are consecutive, and must be all taken. A leap leads to exhaustion, reaction, failure.

The force of inheritance which inwraps the undeveloped buds of virtue, which wars against vice simply because vice wars against life,—the victories of a parasite ruin it like its defeats—is felt to bear at times with great severity, not to say with injustice, on the individual. The condition of the child under the heavy entail of sin, its physical life poisoned in all its channels, and the moral atmosphere which surrounds it such as to bring constant irritation to body and mind, seems most unfortunate and unkind; yet to frame the law otherwise would be to take from sin much of its self-destructive force; would be to hide its evil, and heal its wounds. It is no part of the present scheme of things to make opportunities equal. Variety in temptations, in difficulties, arises not only under this law but under every law, under original endowment, under the shifting, fortuitous combination of circumstances. Every form and degree of difference between man and man give rise to the

same question in kind, if not in degree. This variety of opportunity is not a point of justice, but one of wisdom and good-will.

That different dangers should fall to different individuals is ingrained in the entire nature of things and of man, a principle unimpeachable in its operation. Personal love demands only that these differences should not arise arbitrarily, unnecessarily, in the interest of some private preference. The decrees of God, as they are often presented, are precisely of this arbitrary character. They are justified on no ground but that of a supreme will, and will is no justification of any action ; will as will is irrational, it derives its reasonableness from the purposes it pursues. But inheritance, as a law of nature, a law of God, is not characterized by arbitrariness ; quite the reverse. So incorporate is it with our entire experience and discipline, that it is not easy to construct, even in imagination, any other principle in operation.

The point at which the hardships of this law need reduction to our thoughts is doubtless the disaster of sin in one who is fully caught by the bewildering, driving current of hereditary evil. Such an experience is not to be interpreted by our own experience, nor are its results to be regarded as overtaking it in the same quick, absolute, irredeemable way. No one sins beyond his perceptions. The moral element declines with the intuitions. The evil sinks into a physical one, and the needed redemption becomes one of external as well as of internal conditions. If we hold steadily to this first axiom of ethics, that transgression is a conscious violation of law, the condition of the transgressor, whatever it may be, is greatly softened ; and his misfortunes pass more and more from the spiritual into the physical world. Guilt and disaster no longer merge into each other as one composite, punishable

offence. Each trial, moreover, is an opportunity, and used skillfully becomes, by the touch of a resolute will, a victory. Nor ought we to dogmatize with quite the certainty we now do on the issues of adverse circumstances, and of character debased and depraved by them. The outlook is dark enough certainly, confining the eye to the things it sees and the issues of mischief manifestly in them ; these are not the directions in which to find occasion to heap up in gratuitous prophecy the anger of God. If we were content to leave the future more quietly, even more hopefully, to his expurgating and redemptive laws, we should find lighter offence to our sense of justice. It is our own assertions of evil that chiefly embarrass us. It is not so much what is, as what we venture to affirm shall be, which casts upon our faces the pallor of a great moral fear, the fear of excessive, rigorous, unforgiving punishments. The tenets of dogmatists may seek for these superlative motives, the dim vision of vice and unbelief may be startled by them, but it is sad indeed to rend with these unnecessary thorns the wise, tender heart of faith. It is the office of faith, of faith in divine wisdom and love, to shelter us from these alarms and wounds, alarms that provoke nothing but a deadly fear, wounds that let out only the life-blood of the soul, its courage and its confidence, its belief in a Holy Divine Father. Let us take punishment as a present, wholesome fact, and follow on with it as a wise, patient instrument, always subordinate to its ends.

The scheme of discipline, among whose leading laws is this of inheritance, must be taken and weighed as a whole. The individual indeed yields to the many, the part to the whole, yet the whole is for the individual, and shaped by the individual for common ends. The aggregate gains not only greatly surpass the aggregate losses

by this combined life, but growth, large development are not possible to the individual in any other way. Human differs from brute life in its unfolding chiefly at this very point, the superior combination of its individuals, the degree in which they, as members, are taken up into the race as a whole. Every step of civilization, and yet more of Christianization, is one of involution, an institution of additional dependencies. Hence, as all the possibilities of good to man are locked up in these relations of interdependence and joint ministration, whose central feature is this of transmission, we may gladly accept the law, while we regret the mischief which sin works under it. Yet the individual retains his individuality ; he is never sacrificed to a common exigency, never ridden down by a general law. His conditions may be made harder, his dangers greater, but the possibility of good still goes with him. His responsibilities never exceed his powers, his duties are graded down to his circumstances. The fact of sin it is that perverts and distorts the soul ; the form of it without the indwelling power goes for little. A sluggish, dull, imperceptive life finds protection in its very deadness. Its dormant germs may survive the rigor of the winter. It is the sin against the Holy Spirit that is not forgiven.

The problem of transmission is one with that of sin. Sin is incident to the growth of virtue. It does not thereby lose its character. It still remains hateful, a thing to be allowed rather than that the conditions of freedom and religious life should be swept away. Explanations hardly make this first fact plainer. It is a primary fact in the present system, that it is open on various sides to partial failure through its pursuit of a higher voluntary life. Accident, disease, ignorance, vice are incident to powers to be strengthened and enlarged by use, to knowledge which is the fruit of experience, to righteousness which

rests on self-government. Are these gains worth the liabilities and labors by which they are reached? Every strong, wise man answers, Yes, and with an emphasis proportioned to his integrity. The spirit of the system is the best spirit of its best members. Courage, strength, faithfulness make light of any price they pay in the fulfillment of their mission. Every good man feels that he does well if he wins.

Could these gains be otherwise won? This is to ask, whether a thing can be and can not be at the same time. Our wisdom, our personal power are the product, the peculiar product of our experiences. These things are not otherwise to be gotten, nor have we any reason to believe that there are any equivalents for them to be attained on lighter terms. The sacrifices made in their behalf only enhance our estimate of them, deepen our pleasure in their possession. The wretchedness of the world is the renunciation that falls upon sin ; the liabilities of life are the fearful incentives by which we are pushed forward to a bold struggle. On either side the penalties of sin are redemptive. If we overcome, they measure our victory ; if we are overcome, they renew our motives to effort. Sin and suffering are parts of the system as one of freedom and intelligence, one dealing with incipient, sluggish faculties looking to growth, a growth which shall yield a rational kingdom, shot through and through with penetration and purpose, patterned and supported on either side by the reciprocal interaction of living processes.

We are also much too near the beginning of things rightly to estimate them. The great possibilities lie in advance of us. The morning light has hardly risen. Go back a hundred years, and how sensibly is the view altered ! It is the end that is to make us utterly forget the hardships of the beginning. Spiritual life has

wrought only a little in society, only a little in the individual. As it enlarges its work, binds it together, and hastens it forward, the evils incident to evolution will rapidly disappear, and its fruits become apparent. The light of day no more certainly scatters the discouragements of night than will the Kingdom of our Lord, as it advances, dispel its opening dangers.

Under these conditions of growth, personal discipline, extended interaction, and a transmission of results, man is slowly brought forward to a recognition of the divine law or will, and a joyful concurrence with it. Perfection implies a complete recognition of all the laws of conduct, and a full, sympathetic response to them. Perfection is relative not absolute, progressive not complete. New relations of conduct are constantly disclosed, new connections of man with man and of man with nature are discovered and instituted, and thus law is not only enlarged on old ground, but also gains new ground. The soul that bears into progressive conditions, intelligently and lovingly, its interior, expansive law, as at once its own constitutional order and the will of God toward it, is moving in the true orbit of its being. Any other perfection would be limitation, arrest, decay. When the spirit has exhausted the conditions, the possibilities, of life, it has exhausted life; and this growth of powers is indefinitely varied and augmented by the participation of each in the composite growth of the race. The new grounds of development thus accumulate more rapidly than the individual can exhaust them, and fresh phases of experience open in a thousand directions. As knowledge, action, life move forward, one is more and more overwhelmed by the wealth of resources opening to him. He covets a vigor of powers and length of years proportionate to these stretches of thought and enterprise, to this growth of character to be

secured under them. Thus rational life gives itself grander and yet grander conditions of living. To move with spirits in this spiritual realm under its amplifying law, as one whom God cherishes and feeds from his infinite fullness, this is the soul's discipline and promise.

The initial idea of spiritual development is law, divine law. What is the law of God? What is that law of righteousness with which, as rational beings, we are peculiarly concerned? It is announced by conscience, the ethical faculty which discriminates between right and wrong. This law of righteousness is as broad as the guidance of a perfect moral nature, and conforms in practice to the lines of action enforced in each soul by its own insight. Our moral nature is conditioned wholly on the faculty which discloses the right, no matter how narrow its present range of vision. If any being is unable to make, at a single point, this distinction, he is not a moral being, and can come under no spiritual law. He must be remanded to physical forces, which only can deal with him. But this faculty, as the central power of the mind, is rational, and is able to see the good and the evil in action only as the action itself, in its bearings, is understood. Hence all our powers of observation and deduction, all present and possible acquisitions, are called for and put to constant service in preparing the conditions of sound moral judgments. As also conduct is colored by our affections, and can only be understood by virtue of broad and delicate sensibilities, every step in character, every movement forward, become conditions of a more complete moral life. The moral, the divine, law is thus broadened at each stage of development, and looks to the ultimate inclusion of all rational action under claims of varying intensity. No rational action is absolutely indifferent to character, in its immediate or remote bearings, and thus no action escapes some

guidance from the moral intuition, the architect of character. Physical laws, so far as they touch conduct, claim obedience under the moral law, since obedience is the condition of that well-being toward which the conscience shapes our effort.

The divine law, as law, is promulgated by our moral nature. This is evident in the fact that any direct command, like those of the decalogue, receives its authority from our moral nature, is made ethically, spiritually, obligatory by it. The primary commands of God, those which pertain to character, appeal to the conscience, attach themselves to us at this point ; secondary, positive precepts, ritualistic ones, find an indirect sanction in the rightfulness of the Divine authority. A command which can not lay hold of the conscience in one or other of these ways ceases to be a moral force, is either a nullity, or, like a physical fact, addresses itself to our interests. The precepts and principles of the Scripture are spiritual simply because they can reach and establish their authority over our spiritual nature. They meet its tests, and are one in kind with it.

This is shown by the bold, concise form, the restricted, desultory form, of these precepts. The ten commandments, while very comprehensive, are most inadequate unless entrusted to a discriminating, active moral sentiment ; verbally they go but a very little way toward order. Regarded as indices of conduct, rendered in action by the spirit, the disposition, which underlies them, they are large, wise guides of behavior. This work of exposition, application, can be committed to nothing but our own insight, our spiritual powers. The precepts of the New Testament are unsystematic, fragmentary ; were called forth by the passing circumstances of those to whom they were addressed. Such precepts can not serve the purposes of

formal law, designed to cover sufficiently, coherently and finally the entire field of action ; they do answer most admirably the ends of education, awakening and guiding the moral sense, giving to it an insight that is ready to accrue to the benefit of character in all its bearings. The precepts of the parent, entering at an exigency, develop the strength of the child under its own constitution.

Our Saviour is more careful to enunciate principles than to shape precepts ; to announce, as in the two great commandments, the feeling which should underlie action than to insist on its precise form. This method implies moral discipline, an ultimate reference of action to the perception of the agent. Formal law, law whose authority is in the lawgiver simply, proceeds in quite another way ; it is tyranny and adopts the methods of tyranny.

The progressive form in which the instructions of the Bible are given, lead to the same conclusion. It is an adaptation to growing powers. Laws externally constructed and sustained, shaping the life under them by their own force, would not be thus dependent on times and seasons, would not follow up each insight with a new unfolding. The fact that law grows, discloses its seat in a living soul, that it is a handwriting of God, not on a table of stone, but in the heart of man.

The moral, the religious discipline of man is found in deepening and enlarging the sense of divine law, and in leading the whole soul to rejoice in it. But as the divine law is expounded and developed by conscience, religious training resolves itself into awakening the ethical intuitions, calling out under them the spiritual affections, and putting at their disposal that broad knowledge which enables them to carry a law of spiritual life into every department of action. So long as knowledge can be enlarged, social relations multiplied, and sympathies deepened, so long is

there occasion for the development of the inner divine law of life, so long is there room for growth.

A discipline of this nature can be initiated at any point at which right and wrong can be disclosed. It is impossible to say that any knowledge, as knowledge, is necessary to salvation. It is the mind's discovery of its own law of life, and attitude toward it, that are essential ; no matter how partially, or in what direction the law is first seen. Any obedience prepares the way for a larger revelation, and a growing activity. No belief, as a belief, brings salvation ; it is the mind's action in believing and under belief that conditions character. Sin is a conscious struggle against the moral law, holiness a conscious adoption of it. These forms of action, opposed in nature, tend to exclude each other, and the mind is forced, therefore, to a decisive choice between them.

The development of the race as a whole is closely analogous to the growth of each individual in it. Our first parents, without transmitted or personal experience, without, therefore, a law of moral action clearly defined in any direction, were open, like children, to very blind impulses. In the child the moral intuition is first called out by authority. It comes in to fortify the command of a parent, and is quickened under these commands. The race, in its childhood, required the same preponderance of explicit command, external authority, ritualistic religion. The personal and formal, the narrow and definite, injunction, came to the aid of incipient powers, that could not master their own laws, or reach the conditions of independent growth. The sentiments of the parent, his approval and disapproval, interpret for the child, in a most vivid and impressive way, the character of action, and put him on its contemplation. The pleasure and displeasure of God, his personal feelings enforced on the worshiper

in a variety of methods, correctly and erroneously, bring to him the same schooling. A priesthood, through whom the religious bearings of actions find definite expression, a national life, which shapes its fortunes under a common faith, suffers common disasters and chants common peans, are to a race, as a household to a child, conditions of training.

From this slow tutelage, which constantly rests back for its value on the awakened moral sense, the race is able at length to pass over to its majority, to that development in which the religious life is left chiefly to the privacy of each spirit, in which the law becomes interior and rules the conduct by intuitions, judgments, affections, by the bent of growth. The moral nature, immature and narrow in its decisions, underlies this movement ; is first awakened by personal authority, and so led through law and justice up to wisdom and grace. From outside authority it passes on to inside order. The divine command coalesces with the divine life, as in Christ, and so goes forth to cover every department of action.

This growth, history, philosophy and science unite to aid, since they give the clues to individual and social progress. Character becomes more and more the one product toward which all production tends, the one condition on which all prosperity hinges. The physical world is put into perfect ministration to the spiritual world, and gathers from it additional beauty and order.

A development that throughout involves choice, and thus the slow accumulations of experience, necessarily starts with relatively feeble, incipient powers ; since power itself, as the safe, rapid use of faculties is to be the product of discipline. It is the very nature of training to begin low down, to be satisfied if it can make a single preliminary point. This schooling of the race, first laying

strong hold of its collective life, is transferred more and more to individual development. It substitutes for conventional law private conviction, for customs conduct that is built up by hourly insight. A discipline that first concerns itself with external action, and enforces itself by interested motives, gradually discloses the internal law of life, and fastens itself on the affections. That which came as a command is at length incorporated into living powers, and yields its impulse in daily pleasures. The soul, in this training, first seeks the Kingdom of Heaven as something without itself, and at length finds it within itself; it first stands at the foot of Sinai, lending a trembling ear to distressful authority, and at length sits at the feet of Christ, in possession of that better part which shall not be taken from it.

Throughout, the personal element never disappears. So supported, the moral law, though present in a very imperfect form, may gain a growing hold on the life. The government which the moral nature is not yet ready to set up and administer, is set up and administered by king, priest, prophet, who give distinctness to a will in part at least the will of God. When spiritual insight has been developed, though the seat of authority is transferred to the heart, though the will of God is seen to be expressed in physical and spiritual laws which work righteousness, the personal element is not lost. It has threefold force in the obedient spirit, as obedience has been from the beginning rendered to it and rendered by it. Personality is lodged in the moral nature, and is developed in its ruling sympathies as this is strengthened. A soul so awake to its own rational life preëminently craves contact with rational life. Though the physical universe ceases to be alien to God, or alien to ourselves, when we conceive it as offering and holding permanent conditions of progress, yet

it comforts the spirit, and quickens the soul, only as it is felt to be permeated everywhere with the divine thought and affection, and so permeable with our thoughts and affections. The personal element which has before been concentrated in manifestations, commands, providences, is now diffused as a gracious presence through every work of God.

We hold fast to the personal being of God, that is, to his conscious, rational being, for only thus can the universe make answer to the soul of man, and nourish its powers in a sympathetic, higher life. Bereft of that which is above him, pushed upward as the highest product of the earth, the hopes of man perish, his thoughts and affections shrink away to that which sustains them. So wither the flowers, sinking again into the dust from which they spring. The revelation of God in Christ, though it has far less of mere authority, fewer actions enjoined and rewards offered outside the constitution of the human soul, is more than ever permeated with love and the sympathetic impulses of a divine fellowship.

Whatever we may think speculatively of the personal element, there has been no religious discipline of any moment in the world without it. On the other hand, it has been the universal form under which moral truth has been applied. It is inseparably interwoven with the miraculous in manifestation, and with the supernatural in the modification of the minds and hearts of men.

The doctrine of a personal God is rejected or resisted by some for this very reason, that it carries with it miracles, and more or less of the supernaturalism of current Christian sects. Matthew Arnold, as a vigorous representative of this feeling, and also as one endowed with fine insight and a truly religious spirit, especially invites attention. We believe that the underlying connection which

gives rise to his aversion to the personal in religion is a real one, and that a belief in God prepares the way for the supernatural, and imparts its complexion to the New Testament. The cohesion of Christian doctrines with their fundamental declaration, the personal being of God, he thus expresses: "For, granted that there are things in a system that are puzzling, yet they belong to a *system*, and it is childish to pick them out by themselves, and reproach them with error, when you leave untouched the basis of the system where they occur, and indeed admit it for sound yourself. . . . Now, with the One Supreme Governor, and miracles, given to start with, it may fairly be urged that the construction put by common theology on the Bible data, which we call the story of the three Lord Shaftesburys, and in which the Atonement fills a prominent place, is the natural and legitimate construction to put on them, and not unscriptural at all."* "'Till we are agreed as to what we mean by *God*, we can never, in discussing religious questions, understand one another, or discuss seriously."† "When they—religious people—are pressed, they collect themselves all they can, and make a great effort, and out they come with this piece of science: *God is a Personal First Cause, who thinks and loves, the moral and intelligent Governor of the universe.*"‡ Arnold objects to this statement as one not capable of verification. "If we announce it we shall be met with the reply, First let us verify that there rules a great Personal First Cause, who thinks and loves, the moral and intelligent Governor of the universe."§ In place of this statement he would put the statement, "There rules an enduring Power not ourselves which makes for righteousness."|| This can be

* Literature and Dogma, p. 261.

† Ibid, p. 270.

‡ Ibid, p. 270.

§ Ibid, p. 267.

|| Ibid, p. 267.

verified. "How? why as you verify that fire burns—*by experience.*"*

We doubt both the definiteness of the new statement offered by Arnold, and the ease of its verification. What does Arnold mean by 'the Eternal Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness'? It is something which he indicates with a capital, and makes equivalent to the Eternal, "The Eternal that loveth righteousness"; the Eternal, of whom it is said, "Eternal, thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another." If we allow no halo of personality to play about these words, then are they most insufficient and inapplicable; if we do admit this halo, then are they most misleading and confusing. They dodge hither and thither, gather all illusion, and escape all precision. If matter and material laws are alone intended by the Power not ourselves,—and what else can of right be indicated—then that Power can cherish no love, can offer no spiritual refuge, can be in sympathy with nothing, and work for nothing. We could as fitly assert that a grist-mill makes for fine flour, or a smelting furnace for pig-iron, as affirm that the physical laws of the world nourish righteousness, because righteousness prospers under them. There is a personal coloring in our words. Let us lay aside all glosses of language, all garniture of metaphor, and say that we mean by the Eternal such eternity, such love, such refuge as are discoverable in physical facts, and no more. If this only is meant by the Eternal, it becomes definite, but at the same time, most barren, most unable to play the impassioned part assigned it in religious life. It is the personal force of its adjuncts, the personifying character of its attributes, that sustain it under the warm, passionate thought of Arnold.

Nor is the fact so verifiable to the senses that the not-

* Literature and Dogma, p. 267.

ourselves, the physical world, makes for righteousness. It is easily verifiable to the cultivated moral nature, that, under conjoint spiritual and physical laws, under the ourselves and the not-ourselves, righteousness does make for happiness, and unrighteousness for misery. For this proof two things are necessary, however, quickened moral intuitions to receive it, vigorous moral forces, permeating social life, to make it good, and to enforce it. The Fiji think it a measure of wise economy to eat human flesh, an act of parental affection to slay an aged parent. They regard these customs as possessed of a practical wisdom that can be verified. "How? Why as you verify that fire burns,—by experience." Their experience, as interpreted by themselves is quite in conflict with morals. This sentiment is to be corrected by a broader perception of more purely moral relations, and, as incident thereto, and helpful in modifying the make-up of resultant facts, by a radical change in public opinion, public approval and censure. Polygamy, slavery, many mischievous institutions, play a part more or less admissible in one stage of civilization, and are yet wholly rejected in a subsequent one. The verifiable idea has changed ground. It is not physical forces alone, or even primarily, that execute moral laws, but moral forces, our own constitution quite as much as that of the world. The wisdom of these laws is verifiable, therefore, only to cultivated moral intuitions on moral grounds, not to the senses on physical grounds. Wisdom is justified of her children, and of them only. The thief as a detected thief, regrets the unskillfulness of the theft rather than the theft itself. If the theft troubles him, it is on superior moral considerations, not on physical ones. If the moral nature could itself be shaken off, the divine law within us and the social laws which rest on it, the fruits of sin would be in many things obscure and

unverifiable. The not-ourselves would not make for righteousness with its present power and clearness. The survival of the fittest would mean the survival of the strongest, and the strong would sacrifice the weak with the same impunity, the same advantage, that now fall to animals. The moral after-clap would disappear.

That the present aggregate of forces within us and without us makes for righteousness we thoroughly believe, and also that this concurrent tendency can be shown by experience, if that experience is broad, protracted, and morally penetrative. But the experience must rest upon and be commensurate with the truths it is to disclose. Spiritual truths do not shine out under a purely physical experience. "Neglect of the Bible is" not "punished just as putting one's hand into the fire is punished." * If it were, then the fiction should be true that the boat in which Sabbath-breakers take their pleasure is especially liable to be cast away. A direct reference in this way of physical effects to moral causes has justly brought a phase of religious instruction into disrepute. From this it follows that the moral nature has its own prior basis, and can not verify its authority by simply physical events.

The just live by faith, not without faith ; by a spiritual experience, not by a social and physical one. We are to love God whom we have not seen. It is the whole purpose of our moral training to give weight to purely moral, that is, to invisible, intangible forces. Arnold usually recognizes this, for he makes it the *secret* of Christ, on which he lays so much stress, that he holds the outer life under the rule of the inner life. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. Whosoever would come after me, let him renounce himself, and take up his cross daily

* Literature and Dogma, p. 274.

and follow me. Is it not inconsistent to expect a secret of this nature to verify itself except to those who have already accepted it, and pursued it? But a verification of this sort can not play the part of antecedent proof otherwise than as testimony ; and must then be addressed to a faith that quite transcends merely physical experience. This fundamental principle, an Eternal, a not-ourselves that makes for righteousness, demands, then, precisely the same form of verification as the proposition it displaces, a personal God who loves righteousness. This last statement has found a complete verification in the spiritual experience of many thousands, and if a higher ethical experience is good as proof of the one proposition, it should equally be of the other. It is the habitual claim of those who repose in a personal being as the Ruler of the world, that it is a faith commended by the experience which arises under it, that the more thoroughly the belief is entertained and the life shaped by it, the deeper is the confirmation of its hourly fruits. This too is a faith that in its ministration to spiritual life, in the inner experience of the soul, "can prove itself, if it is so, and will prove itself, because it is so." These conclusions of the believer are just unless we affirm that a physical experience alone verifies any thing, that an ethical experience confirms nothing except the state of mind that entertains it. But if this assertion be granted, all verification of moral principles drops away ; for sensations as sensations can not establish them. Their proof is not in the sensation but in our rendering of it, that is in the moral conditions by which we surround it and interpret it. The capsizing of a boat on the Sabbath does not directly confirm a moral precept. It is, therefore, the moral state of each individual that must define and measure for him his verification.

The Fiji will make the Fiji's rendering, and likely enough verify cannibalism and parricide.

Nor need we be distressed by the thought, that our "God is a *magnified and unnatural man*." Better that he should be this than less than this. None of us escape our shadows unless we withdraw altogether into the darkness. It is to withdraw into the darkness, to deny thought and love to God, lest we should liken him to man; to retreat into the impersonal as a refuge from the personal; to turn and go backward lest we should fail to go sufficiently far forward. If our formula of thought concerning God is, This and more, then we put without danger into the this the highest our thoughts attain to.

That the conception of God which fell to Israel was in advance of that which falls to us, as Arnold seems to think, is both without proof and extremely improbable. Our movement has not been, as such a supposition indicates, backward. Earlier ages are characterized by a more restricted not by a less restricted notion of Deity. Personality does not necessarily belittle that to which it is applied. Its limitations are not restrictions but powers, capacities, sensibilities, grander conditions and forms of being. All creation, all endowment, is definition, separation, in this sense limitation. We misapply personality in its relation to God only when we insist on some given form of it, on the narrowness incident to human intelligence as essential to intelligence itself. Says Arnold, "All Israel's language about this power, except that *it makes for righteousness*, is approximate language, the language of poetry and eloquence, thrown out at a vast object of our consciousness, not fully apprehended by it, but extending infinitely beyond it."* Why should Arnold make the exception that he does? The words, *it makes for right-*

* Literature and Dogma, p. 267.

cousness, are not so supremely definite and exhaustive as to call for their exclusion from partial, perplexed, poetic statements. What does the *it* refer to? What is covered by the words *make for*? and what is *righteousness*? By the time we have fully answered these questions, we shall find, that there is no more a uniform and sufficient idea back of them than there is of the other words by which we express God's government; we shall find that being moral, personal words, they carry with them the entire moral, personal problem.

This conception of the tendency of God's government, that it makes for righteousness, which belonged so clearly to Israel, accompanied conceptions of the most anthropathic character. No one can read the narrative of the dealings of the Lord with Abraham, or with Moses, without discovering not merely the presence of the personal element, but its presence under a very narrow form. "And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush and said, Moses, Moses."*

When we speak of God as a personal being, our language is no more to be construed in a scientific and exact way than are the words of Arnold, when he says, The Eternal, that makes for righteousness. They are more inclusive, but no more final, no nearer a mathematical formula. They rest on precisely the same laws of language and of thought, the excellent and inescapable law that our words point toward, but never compass, our highest ideas. Indeed Arnold seems especially faulty at this point in priding himself on the verifiable character of his favorite phrase as being one of which the senses and daily experience can make something. Its excellence is

* Ex. iii, 3, 4.

quite other than this. Are we not with Israel more poetic and eloquent, and by so much more correct, throwing out our words at a vast object of consciousness, when we say, God includes personal attributes, wisdom and grace, that he so creates and combines all things that in their make-up they hold his rational purposes ; more wise than if we were to content ourselves with the bald words, the not-ourselves that makes for righteousness, under the delusive idea that we had now an initial scientific truth? We insist on the right of every mind to use the largest words, the deepest conceptions, as the symbolic characters under which it approaches Deity ; as the glowing outline of the cloud that veils for it the Sun of Righteousness. We are not always wisest when we say the least unless this least inwraps, and is intended to inwrap, the most, as the hidden core of its being. *He* is better than *it* ; the righteous ruler than the not-ourselves, because they suggest more, are more poetic, are thrown out more boldly, more believingly, toward that one supreme conception which is ever entering ever eluding our thoughts, inviting our love and instantly enlarging it. Arnold derides the definiteness of Protestant statements, and falls into the same error in commending his own statement as one capable of direct verification. Verifiableness is barrenness, let us take the broader thought, looking to the larger experience, and gathering its convictions along the high, far-reaching paths of our being. That statement of the Divine Life is best which includes the most, excludes the least ; which starts in the clear, strong light, and fades out as this fades out under failing vision. Personality is only a starting point, and the best starting point, because it is nearest to us, and contains for us infinitely more than any other. Arnold errs in striving to verify a truth on a plane lower than its own, in looking upon personality as a narrow and narrowing

idea, and in striving to check the soul, flowing forth under its own impulses and with its own imagery toward God.

It is not easy to understand why Arnold should be disturbed by a liability to disagreements in opinion. Taking a position quite his own, he should readily accept discrepancies. He should hardly expect a speedy admission of his own divergent conclusions, verified though they may be to his mind by an experience as plain as that fire burns. He rejects a belief in a personal Ruler, because, "once launched on this line of hypothesis and inference, with a Supreme Governor assumed, and the task thrown upon us of making out what he means us to infer, and what we may suppose him to do and to intend, one of us may infer one thing and another of us another, and neither of us can possibly prove himself to be right or his adversary to be wrong."* The idea of quelling this discord by a new dogma is ludicrous. Contentions of this kind we pass through, we do not retreat from them. The most definite truths are those which morally do the least for us. Mathematical truths are demonstrable, yet they have the least emotional character, and lie farthest from conduct. It would be well if we could look upon phases of belief, belief pertaining to the higher themes, as more individual, more peculiar to our personal experience and passing insight; as the intellectual incidents of our progress which do not so much express the permanent nature of truth, as our immediate relations to it, the present angle of our vision; and so living by these phases of life, could pass through them to conceptions better and broader than they. Why should we return to the baldest and poorest statement of doctrine as our condition of unity? Why go backward to reach a point of convergence, when our first duty would be to forsake it? Let us rejoice in a diversity which indi-

* Literature and Dogma, p. 263.

cates divergent and growing experiences, and enables us to render to others the more efficient aid by seeing what they fail to see. We can do much for each other, if we freely leave to each his own insight, his own experiences, his own conclusions, bringing our convictions as farther contributions to a growth which prospers only as its order of procedure and internal development are rigorously regarded. If we are always looking about "for plain experimental proof, such as that fire burns," we shall dwarf our spiritual natures, and narrow down our opinions to rudiments, that are not even used as rudiments, of thought.

Arnold would push aside a belief in a personal God as sure to lead to many and conflicting conclusions. These parasites of faith are to be exterminated, and exterminated by destroying the parent life. On such conditions we may as well let them live, for the worst they themselves can do is to undo the life that nourishes them. The mastery of the superior organization, the superior impulse, the superior faith is what we should covet, for this will hold in check the things that prey upon it. Discrepancies of doctrine are best removed by that growth which leaves them behind, as the tree sheds the leaves of a previous cycle. With our unverifiable ideas, our conclusions beyond the range of experience, our conflict of opinions, we shall, growing in spiritual life, be able to do all that Arnold hopes to do by a construction of thought so superior, as he thinks, in definiteness and experimental proof. "The great thing, as we believe, in favor of such a construction as we put upon the Bible is, that experience, as it increases, constantly confirms it, and that though it can not *command* assent, it will be found to *win* assent more and more."*

Wherever we go, how far soever we retreat, we must

* Literature and Dogma, p. 278.

still take our ground, and win the thoughts of men to it. It is the personal in man that is developed by religion, to this that government falls. But the personal is best won by the personal, by conquering sympathies drawing the heart toward them. Faith looks for a victory of the personal over the impersonal, the spiritual over the physical, in the world about us akin to that which is taking place within us. Thus is the harmony restored; seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, we find all things added unto us. The order is not these things and then righteousness, but righteousness and so the things it orders. The impersonal is not to grade down the personal, but the personal is to suffuse and take up the impersonal. The law of righteousness makes its way by ruling itself into the physical world. The physical world does not issue in it; it gathers in and includes all, as the ruler of all. Righteousness is alien to matter, it is sovereign in mind. Righteousness can be lodged only in One, righteous, and go forth from him.



CHAPTER XIII.

Constructive Facts. Trinity. Christ. His Divinity. His Work. Holy Spirit. Sanctification. The Church.

THE revelation of God in Christ is the great constructive fact in Christianity. The incarnation granted, it becomes the heart of the faith, defining its spirit and power. Incidental to this revelation, a tribute to its magnitude, comes that of the trinity. This doctrine, if present at all in the Old Testament, is there in so obscure a form as to show no working power. The pres-

ence of Christ on the earth and his divinity are the new facts which strike backward into the character of God, and bring to it, in many directions, new disclosures. The divinity of Christ and the trinity of the Godhead are inseparable doctrines, and the assertion of the first gives immediate occasion for the second. Nor does the Scriptural declaration of the doctrine of the trinity seem to have passed beyond, in explanation and precision of statement, what is necessarily involved in the finite being, yet divine attributes, of Christ. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is subordinate to this of the divinity of our Lord, and a secondary out-flow from it.

If Christ was God, if he included directly a divine life, then evidently, as one finite, on another side of his being,—as a man, he failed to completely inclose, or perfectly disclose, the divine nature. So to look upon him under his limitations, straitened and hedged about by the close bounds of a human life, would be to disguise and cripple the Divinity set forth. Every proposition concerning God, every statement of his nature, must be supplemented by the words, *This and more*; equally was this true of the incarnation in Christ. The finite was no more sufficient here than elsewhere for the Infinite. Infinite wisdom, power and love were pressing up to the point of disclosure, yet but a portion of them were actually uttered, and a yet smaller portion actually apprehended by any recipient. Hence that given must always bear with it as a leading fact the suggestion of that withheld. The infinite character of the series must be indicated in the statement of its first terms. How repressing are the restraints put upon Christ by the incarnation, so much so as frequently to lead the philosophic mind to exclaim, *This can not be*; God and man are terms incompatible, and a God-man is no God! Quiet our thoughts as we will, remember as we

may, that every revelation of God in words or in works is, as a restriction, beset with the same difficulty; that the soul and life of man are the broadest and most transparent medium possible between us and Heaven, and we must still feel, that this wisdom and love of Christ, if most real and divine, are, in reference to the depths of being in the Almighty, as the simple fountain that flows out at the foot of far-reaching, inaccessible and inscrutable summits. Christ is always the *Son* of God, begotten then and there out of the strength of God, that he may always have back of him to the irreverent, hasty, shallow thoughts of men, the Father, the inexhaustible resources of the Divine nature. A revelation of any kind, more especially of this kind, which gathered itself up in a rounded, complete, independent person, calls instantly for a fresh assertion of the Infinite as its background, that it may stand forth a simple bas-relief, a thing of suggestions and not of exhaustive statements. The truth must be, as it were, at once given and taken back again, lest men be misled by its apparent narrowness.

The doctrine of the trinity found this occasion for its incidental, inevitable utterance, and unites itself to the divinity of Christ—so limited, simple, explicit in its form—to give the thoughts extension, reverence, worship again, and throw them back once more fully, fairly on to the mysterious, the infinite, the unfathomable. Thus the mind receives aid, and is at the same time withheld from its worst error in supposing this to be all. Such seems to us the ground, the occasion of the new doctrine of the trinity. It was a reassertion of the Infinite as against the finite, a fresh planting of the Almightyness of Heaven back of each and every revelation, a reëmphasizing of Divinity, that Christ might declare the Divine. The doctrine is present, not as a new interior revelation of the Divine Being, but as

an instrumental truth, a *quasi* truth, to help us in the grasp of other truths. We believe, therefore, that this doctrine, held in explicit formula, is often used for precisely the opposite purpose for which it was declared.

This article of our faith, in its formal statement, has been frequently pushed much beyond its Scriptural basis and practical service, and been formulated in words quite too rigid, and wholly at war with the mystery, the depth, the unsearchableness of the Divine which it helps to keep alive, which it was intended to keep alive, by rescuing it from too close a construction in Christ. Great but fruitless subtilty has issued, on this subject of the trinity, in rigid and exact dogma at a point at which exactness is impossible, and rigidity inadmissible. "In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son." So runs the Westminster Confession. In this statement, in many before it and in many since with which it stands affiliated, two points are clearly put forth, first, one substance and three persons; second, the genetic dependence of the three, the Son eternally begotten, the Holy Spirit eternally proceeding. The second half of the dogma has relatively lost hold on the Christian mind; the first retains its sharp, familiar outline. Against them both there hold decisive objections.

They treat a subject incapable of exact knowledge as if it were capable of such knowledge, and thus issue in a deceitful wisdom of words. One substance and three persons as a formal definition conveys an incongruous idea; its two members united in one assertion can only properly make one of two impressions. They may be looked on as

a contradictory formula, designed to stand as the symbol of mystery ; or as a proposition whose terms are employed in a meaning quite aside from their ordinary use. On the first supposition, our precise dogma distills back again into mist, and it would have been better to have fallen on some less deceptive, some more changeable, intelligible mode of expressing our sense of mystery and indeterminateness ; or, on the second supposition, the entire work of definition still remains to be performed, and we must show in what sense the word person is used, distinguishing it from substance. In uniting in one statement three persons and one substance we have, then, done nothing clearly, since we are not content to have our words regarded as the symbol of the unintelligible ; nor are we prepared to show in what sense they can be used so as to drop into an explicit, intelligible idea. We are then playing off upon ourselves a delusive verbal proposition as a fundamental truth, and insisting, perhaps, that others shall use it in a similar way. The words, one substance and three persons, as applied to spiritual beings, in whom personality and substantiality look to the same qualities, no more coalesce by their own import than do the words, white and black, right and wrong. All that we take out of our conception of substance wherewith to make that of the independent persons impoverishes the former, and all that we reserve for the substance of Godhead as against its persons famishes the latter. Nor do the comparisons which we bring forward to give distinctness to our thoughts do more than furnish a shadowy, vague footing. Many things are triple in one aspect and one in another, but none of them cover the case, as we are compelled freely to acknowledge. No analogies help us, because they all miss the point of mystery. We can not, having presented our illustration, say, Our trinity is like this ; the sun, its beams,

and the scintillations of those beams, this is our analogue. We are compelled rather to say, This does not touch the root of the matter ; and if we are wise we shall be ready to say, The mystery remains unbroken, let us not cut ourselves off from its hearty acceptance by any more efforts at explanation. Having given our faith a formula, we retreat with an indifferent grace to the unknown. Personality and substantiality inhere in one point ; neither can be passed off as a group of attributes, as a transient mode of being, as a phase of activity ; therefore, under ordinary speech nothing more than a mystery, indicated by a contradiction of language, can belong to our phrase, *three persons in one substance*. Unwilling to leave this article of faith unexplained, as one whose data has not been given with sufficient distinctness for a formula, we may be led to claim for it intuitive vision, a power to penetrate the meaning of words otherwise inexplicable. This we do when we call God the Infinite. We reject exposition, and cast ourselves back on direct insight. Evidently the doctrine of the trinity involves no such primitive intuition of the soul ; it is not a necessity of thought, and is amenable to an ordinary logical process.

Certainly contradictions can, as contradictions, present no claims for acceptance. The fundamental axiom of affirmation is that of identity of terms. To fall away from this is utterly to subvert reason. Nor can we urge that a seeming contradiction may none the less cover a great and consistent truth. The mind, in dealing with propositions, must do so under its own conception of them ; that is what to it they stand for. We are not to accept as a truth what seems to us to be a contradiction, on the ground that something else, not seen by us in the statement, may be true. When that phase of thought shall be presented it will be time enough to decide upon it, and the first

result will be to cast out, as a contradiction, what the mind has previously held, or pretended to hold. No intellectual health, no spiritual good, can be reached by retaining contradictions, by subverting reason at the outset. We may accept things whose conditions we do not understand, but so far as an assertion presents contradictory elements, it is self-destructive; so far as it represents irreconcilable elements, it is unintelligible. The mind ought not to play hide-and-seek with itself, or to suppose that there is some absolute truth back of words, though the words are failing to convey it. What the mind deals with is that proximate to it, the apparent force of the words; if there is a contradiction, the proposition is logically annihilated. To treat it as true is intellectual dishonesty. Any illustration offered of things that are, though they do not seem to us to be, possible, affords no relief; for the fact, whatever it is, when once understood, subverts immediately, as false, our previous conception of it.

We are at a loss how to characterize these explicit doctrinal statements of the trinity, which have belonged to Christian theology since the Nicene council. They are not popular, for they have none of the flexibility of popular speech; they are not merely suggestive, figurative, but are used as definitive and final. Nor can we recognize them as truly philosophical propositions. They lack the clearness, the defining force of the conceptions of true science. The theme, the interior nature of God; the data we hold concerning it, the implication of passages of Scripture that have another purpose than instruction on this point; and the scope of human powers, unable to penetrate the mystery of their own activity even, forbid this field to us as one too remote and difficult for exact knowledge.

What then are these statements but a pseudo-science, which misleads us with the appearance of knowledge with-

out its substance. One of the most essential conditions of wise inquiry, of real and sufficient investigation, is a determination of the limits of knowledge, what things may be known, and under what form they may be known. To cut off the unknowable from futile and confusing effort is even more a gain to theology than to science, since perplexity and obscurity are more native to the one region than to the other. We object, then, to these exact formulæ of the trinity as presumptuous and misleading in reference to ourselves, and most unauthorized and tyrannical in reference to others, when urged on their faith. They attempt what is impossible, cover up failure, and offer barren words to unenlightened minds as divine truth. They may have subserved the single good purpose of occupying the ground against bewildering discussion, and more unendurable assertion. If these objections hold against the phrase, One substance and three persons, much more do they hold against the eternal generation of the Son and procession of the Spirit. If the ideas of personality and substance, as illustrated by our experience, refuse to be combined into a possible trinity, still less will generation and procession, interpreted in a like way, carry us forward in a satisfactory exposition of the interior dependencies of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Remote images and misleading words, if used authoritatively, are worse than no words and no images. The eternal generation and eternal procession of distinct persons from each other is a piece of logodædaly in which the performers are most of all deceived. Nothing in human experience casts a glimmer of light upon the language. To give currency to such ideas, we must consent to forego ordinary inquiry, and assert intuitive processes of an unusual kind. Such truths are not only supernatural in their revelation, they require supernatural gifts for their apprehension.

However admissible this dogmatic method might be, if we were content to attach a variable, shadowy, suggestive force to our language, it becomes wholly mischievous when we claim for it an exact, positive value. We offer as an example of the degree in which this has been done the *Symbolum Quicunque*, a leading and genetic term in the series of doctrinal statements. These are a portion of its assertions. 1. "Whoever would be saved must first of all take care that he hold the catholic faith, 2. Which except a man preserve whole and inviolate, he shall without doubt perish eternally. 3. But this is the catholic faith, that we worship God in trinity, and trinity in unity, 4. Neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance. . . . 20. The Father is made by none nor created nor begotten, 21. The Son is from the Father alone, not made, not created, but begotten, 22. The Holy Spirit is not created by the Father and Son, nor begotten, but proceeds."* Christian love is not more sinned against in these propositions than is common sense; and neither is often dealt with more harshly.

We have objected to these formulæ of the trinity as wearing a wholly deceptive appearance of knowledge; this objection passes into the farther objection, that these formulæ are liable to be regarded, as at bottom they are, self-contradictory, and so to burden and perplex individual consciences, and to issue in unbelief. In ordinary language personality pervades and gathers up in one simple being the substantial qualities of manhood; it is referable to their combination in a single living soul; to separate, therefore, personality from substance, with no new definition of words, is to confound the thoughts. But these new meanings are not hinted at in the formulæ themselves, nor can they be entered on without opening afresh the

* Prof. Shedd's *His. of Doctrines*, vol. i, p. 352.

whole problem, and disclosing the deceptive character of its solution. Hence honest, clear minds are distressed by this clinging to words which carry with them a contradiction, and find either the cardinal doctrine of the unity of God put in jeopardy, or a necessity laid upon them of casting away, as a verbal trick, any doctrine of the trinity. A positive denial, displacing an absurdity, thus takes the place of a waiting attitude ; and the earnest mind retreats at once to the tenable, safe position of unity. Its creed becomes, There is one only God, as against the assertion, There are Gods three and one ; or an assertion which to it bears this appearance.

A third objection to these dogmatical statements is, that having no other basis than the Scriptures, they entirely transcend them, and so issue in a sense of perversion and misuse. If the language of the Bible can be treated as exact, and subjected to logical inferences, then indeed some foundation can be found for these formulæ, though hardly a sufficient one. But to do this is plainly to turn Revelation from its purpose. The doctrine of the trinity is introduced indirectly, in figurative language, as a means of relieving the too rigid limits of thought, which would otherwise accompany the incarnation of Christ, and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. It is an instrumental, a modal, doctrine, rather than a substantial one, as used and presented in the Bible. There is no effort made to disclose any thing absolutely concerning the divine constitution, but, Christ appearing, his connection with God is kept alive and softened by the figure of sonship. Used suggestively, figuratively, the words, Father and Son, accomplish the entire purpose for which they were introduced, and we hold fast to Christ as at once human and divine, as an incomplete revelation, yet one that truly unites us to the fullness of God, a fullness we express by

such words as the Godhead, the Father. If, however, we submit such words as these to the logical faculty as sufficient data for all the conclusions that can be extorted from them ; if we make of them a direct, substantial disclosure of the nature of God, we may well enough reach the unintelligible doctrines of procession, generation, one substance and three persons, words of make-believe knowledge. Some statements do their work by casting around our too exact thoughts, our too well-defined images, a vague, vanishing outline, a sense of inadequacy and inexhaustibleness. This must always be true of those statements which accompany any fresh revelation of God. The line of mystery is drawn at a new boundary. While clear light is given at one point it quickly fades into darkness at others. The infinite spaces are opened up, but not pierced by sunbeams. The great revelation made in Christ called for such a readjustment, held the doctrine of the trinity as its poise and counterpart of mystery ; and this doctrine is to be taken as the foil of that great fact, and the kindred fact, the coming of the Spirit. God's working and life drop apart, as it were, that we may take a portion and leave a portion, and be equally consoled and instructed by both. Laying hold of this doctrine otherwise, making of it an independent, explicit fact, we turn the instrumental into the substantial, the figurative into the literal ; we find in revelation a new riddle, and in the riddle new absurdities and contradictions. Language is often a light to see other things by, where it will not allow itself to be scrutinized as an independent fact. If, ceasing to see by it, we turn sharp upon it, challenge it, and compel it to yield its watchword, it may mock and illude us like a spectre.

The effect is most unfortunate on our reverence, our sense of a wise and sufficient way, and our skill in walking

in it, when we put the Scriptures to the rack, and compel them to testify to indirections. To such violence the proverb of Solomon is applicable, The wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood.

The personal pronouns are freely applied to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, yet as we instantly assent to the fact that these pronouns do imply, and must imply, in this connection, less than they do in their ordinary use, we are quite afloat; we have no measure in our hand by which to determine the distance of departure. To construct a contradiction out of this relaxed yet living language, and impose it as revealed truth on our thoughts, is putting the Scriptures to the worst of purposes; is turning them aside from their untrammelled, divine service, and establishing in its place a detestable tyranny. The sonship of Christ is something other than the sonship of man, the personality of Christ in its relation to God than the personality which divides us one from another, and the effort to settle without data the limits of this diversity, while diverting us from the productive use of the truth, is itself the most unremunerative labor. Such speculation belongs to the class of speculations which bewitch the mind by their ingenuity, yet are like spiders' webs, invisible in most lights and at best holding only insects. How simple a thing it is to sit at the feet of the Master, how difficult a thing to take up and treat his inner being and invisible, divine dependencies as a psychological problem! Was it in the first or the last activity that the Scriptures were shaped to help us?

The divinity of Christ was the substantial truth which gave occasion to the formal one of the trinity, and to this we turn. We understand by it a direct union of the divine, the human nature in Christ, in such a way that we are put by him in immediate communion with God. The condi-

tions of this union, by which human restrictions are partially obliterated by the divine fullness, and the divine powers are measurably straitened by human limitations, are strange and undefinable, but scarcely more so than any supernatural revelation whatsoever of God. Evidently the life of man, physical and spiritual, is, of all media and all material manifestations, the best fitted to be a permanent, coherent and intelligible revelation of the Divine Being. If we believe that his Spirit touches the physical world at all to infuse it with his own power, and to make it overflow with an immediate and sensible presence, no more sober, proportionate and instructive instrumentality offers itself to such a service than the rational nature of man. This summit most easily receives and carries the electric light. As far as mystery is concerned our choice must lie between the God-man, Christ Jesus, and the man, Jesus. No intermediate ground abates in the least the incomprehensible in the facts, while it is burdened with peculiar difficulties, as something inadequate, partial, superfluous. How any independent, superior, spiritual life should unite itself to human nature involves the entire mystery of the incarnation, while, if that life was below the Divine Life, the reasons, the hopes and incentives, of the incarnation largely disappear. The mystery of God in Christ, great as it is, is not different in kind from the other mysteries of our faith, or those which gather close about our own spiritual existence. Every man's life is an incarnation. The body is to the spirit, on the one side, a restriction, a series of limitations, and, on the other, an instrument, a revelation, the indispensable ground of a visible life. The inexplicable interplay of mind and body along a line at which two most distinct realms meet and modify each other, and mutually give strange powers to each other, is a direct, formal type of that which we assert in the divinity of

Christ. In him a still higher life bends to these narrow, barren conditions, and they in turn disclose the pressure of great powers, and become proportionately flexible under them, flexible to the point in which to bend farther would be to break, and so to waste the conditions of the labor. So, too, if we believe in a union of our lives with the life of God through his Holy Spirit, we assent to a union suggestive of that in Christ, and transpiring under the same undeniable conditions. If we believe in our own spiritual life, and the spiritual life of God, we are one-with him, and are prepared for variable conditions of intercourse. The disclosure of the greater to the less, the less taken up on terms of communion and instruction by the greater, these are the normal facts that flow from the spiritual premises, and are, with all their mysteries, plainer than the premises would be without them. God undisclosed, the human spirit unvivified by his life, these would be the truly startling and confounding facts, facts so destructive as to quench the light of the spiritual world, and subvert its foundations of faith.

We turn first to the Scriptures as offering the direct proofs of the divine nature of Christ. This truth is so wrought into them, reappears so often as a direct, primary purpose, that for us they lose coherence without it. So many are the passages which affirm or involve the divinity of Christ, that doubt would hardly have arisen on this subject among those who accept the authority of the Scriptures, were it not for certain other passages which seem as directly to declare his subordination to the Father. We have, therefore, to look for reconciliation between assertions seemingly contradictory. One of the two classes of statements must so far bend to the other as to remove contradictions, and unite with it in working toward one conclusion. In an apparent conflict of this character, those

passages should have the precedence in thought which return the most constantly, under the greatest variety of connections; while any infrequency or restriction of use should suggest freely a corresponding restriction of purpose. The passages on which the divinity of Christ rests are sown broadcast through the entire Word of God; are direct and indirect, and infinitely varied in application, while those which assert his subjection to the Father are few, spoken by himself under the immediate impression which his limited incarnate form was producing, and were fitted, as it seems to us, to expound and correct this narrowing relation. For this reason he brings to view the doctrine of the undisclosed Godhead, the Father, greater than he. How easily were the blind thoughts of men ready to stumble over these feeble, sensible facts, far more cogent in their visible restrictions than the spiritual powers of Christ in their invisible might, and to measure him on his narrow and more transient side, instead of his broader and more real one! Hence, under the assertion of the Father, and his superior and undefinable glory, Christ was constantly putting back of himself those hidden and undisclosed things of God with which it was his mission to bring the human mind in contact. Light, great light, yet how inferior as it actually reaches the eyes, the minds and hearts of men, to the light which abides in God! This reversion of Christ to the Father was fitted to keep alive in his disciples a sense of infinite and hidden things, while revealing to them those bright flashes of truth cast outward and earthward in himself. He gave and withheld, he defined and reduced his too exact definition with the same stroke.

There are thus two most sufficient reasons for these words of occasional disparagement on the lips of Christ. They are in direct recognition of the darkness, the eclipse

of faculties, in the incarnation ; and they serve to turn the eyes of his disciples beyond the sensible, visible Christ up to the invisible God whom he seeks to disclose. So cautioned, so impressed, his followers could not fail to look more deeply into his nature than they would have done if left at once to narrow it down to the dimensions it presented to their comparatively blind eyes. It is, then, no arbitrary relation between contradictory texts that leads us to hold fast to the divinity of Christ. The conflicting words seem to us to spring directly from a qualified purpose, from an effort to lift the mind up again, too content to tarry in the narrow and literal, to the inscrutable and the Divine. They give the background of darkness from which every revelation of the Infinite must stand forth.

A second principle of sound interpretation, when one portion of a message is to be construed in subordination to another, is, that those assertions in themselves most weighty should carry their full force. It can not be doubtful in this case which these are, nor to what conclusion this principle will lead us. Those passages which affirm the divinity of Christ, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God," "He who hath seen me hath seen the Father," can have but one rendering weighty enough fully to meet the language. No statements strike deeper than these assertions. There is no opportunity for hints and half-way meanings. The bold import of the words must be met or the divine message falls infinitely below its ostensible force and drift. Here to be less than exact is to be profane and false, and that in a most deceptive, unkind way. Words, divine words, of encouragement and consolation cannot so fall off from their high stretch, and apparent purpose, and preserve even ordinary integrity. So debased a currency can not come from the king's mint. How instinctively will

the honest, sincere mind draw back its language from overstatement, excessive coloring, inadmissible hints; and above all in stating its own claims! The texts which carry with them the divinity of Christ must sweep straight to their mark, or the moral integrity of the Scriptures is lost. The positive, leading, enlivening assertion must remain sound through and through, whatever strain is put upon detached words of curtailment and limitation. The truth and the love of Heaven are both involved in this principle. Because the thing asserted in the divinity of Christ is so great, so momentous, so blessed, we argue that it is the true thing, the divine mind. If not, how great should have been the reserve in approaching it, with how many barriers of denial would the Scripture, would Christ, have held us back from supposing it. There is no parity of importance between the two classes of texts. The second class have hardly any significance except as it is given them by the truthfulness of the first class. The entire weight of both classes turns on the assertion of divinity.

But this leads us to a third principle. That exegesis of apparently conflicting passages is the best which gives them both a sufficient meaning. The texts which state or imply the divinity of Christ can find no adequate, or proximately adequate, meaning short of that which seems to be involved in the words themselves. Any meaning below this falls totally off from the truth, and that on the most dangerous side. Not to be divine is to be something infinitely less than divine; and to claim divinity without possession is the blindest fanaticism or the boldest profanity. Those words on the other hand which Christ uses concerning himself, *the son of man*, perform a sufficient service in lifting the thoughts of his disciples by contrast from the visible to the Invisible, to the mysteries of the

Godhead, and are sufficiently exact in drawing attention to the dependence of the relationship involved in the Revealed and the Unrevealed. Indeed, unless these words of Christ are united to those other words which assert his divinity, they become the merest truism, impertinent, inapt to their own occasion or to any occasion. They must spring up either with this doctrine of divinity, or in direct refutation of it falsely made current ; or be convicted of imbecility and superfluity. Our alternative is made up of the first and the last supposition. There is not in them that clear, reiterated denial which would belong to the second purpose ; nor was any divinity ascribed to Christ aside from his own words and the words of his disciples. These passages, therefore, have no sufficient object except as they rest back on the first class of assertions, and imply their truth. Only thus are they held aloof from weakness and absurdity. Put them in the mouth of John or of Paul, and their assumption and folly are at once evident. These three principles, then, unite in leading us to one conclusion. The assertions most general, the assertions most weighty, carry with them their full force, and both series unite, by the subordination instituted, in harmonious and sufficient meanings.

The divinity of Christ is also deeply and indirectly wrought into the Scriptures by the attitude he takes, and the objects he proposes. He exercises divine power, he accepts worship, he draws the hearts of men to himself, he steps forth to rule nature and man, he identifies himself with the Father. No greater spiritual injury can be inflicted than to mislead the soul in its search after God, or in any way to get between it and God. The character of God and our direct relations to him are the cardinal truths of religion, and will not suffer perversion or concealment. No mere servant of God can do otherwise than to point

distinctly away from himself upward to the common source of light. It is the ultimate result of all religious truth to put us in communion with God, and for one less than God to take the place of God, even by indirection, is to intercept love and worship, is to impose a degrading superstition by a daring assumption. The light, the divine light of revelation, must come through Christ, freely through him, as from our common Father; or it must come from him. This question of divine attributes can not be dealt with carelessly, as we see in the case of Paul and Barnabas, whom the men of Lycaonia were ready to receive as gods. They rent their clothes and ran in among the people crying out, 'Sirs, why do ye these things?' The whole method of Christ becomes a bewilderment, if he may not, by direct right, stand in his assumed attitude. What wound could be comparable with this by which the love and aspirations of truthful hearts are wrongfully appropriated. The entire drift of the Gospels calls for divinity in Christ as the least gift which can sustain his words, and give integrity to his character. The failure becomes complete and fatal, if he falls off from his largest claim. There is no secondary truthful and good work which can be done under these misleading and false conditions. The highest good is turned into the worst evil, lacking its own integrity and sincerity. The core of virtue can not perish, and anything worth possessing remain to it. Christ, because of the very magnitude of his claims, must be judged by their absolute truthfulness. He attempts too much to admit of a partial success. Like other kings, he must win a throne or perish. The divinity of Christ seems to us, therefore, to infold the entire narrative of the Gospels. We see not what can be saved without it, except it be scattered principles, the planks of a wreck, and of these the world has enough. The spiritual power of the New Testament unites

with its formal declarations in enforcing the doctrine of the divinity of our Lord. Our faith is not grounded in exegesis merely, but in living experiences as well, that cry out for this consoling truth in the cast of the divine method.

There is also another confirmation, Christ bears for us the divine lineaments. We do not indeed assume to pronounce positively on the divine. Revelation is as much a loss on one side as it is a gain on another. If there is something given in it, there is yet more that is withheld. The Infinite, in assuming a finite form, whether of act, word or person, falls away from its own fullness, and loses the measureless majesty of the divine, lapsing into restricted utterance. We know God and we know him not, and we know best when the definite and the indefinite are brought nearest together. We can not say of our conception of the character of Christ, This is final, this is sufficient, this is infinite, this is divine. I think we can say, This above all characters expands before our vision and leads us on, this grows as we grow, or we grow because this grows and we follow after, this lies in the line of our revelation, our way heavenward is by it.

The incarnation is a deep humiliation, yet hardly in the way in which it is often thought to be. Its humbling lies not in its hardships, but in its restrictions, its barriers to infinite wisdom and love. A body, a mind, a life that are made to utter a simple human soul, how shall these utter the divine soul? How must that soul wrestle with them? The majesty of Heaven can not find expression here, above all not to the senses;—and to how few is anything expressed that is not sensibly uttered—it is laid aside that truths more restricted, more capable of delivery, may come quietly to the foreground. Spiritual principles, stripped of all accessories that might dazzle or mislead, are to find

a slow, partial, patient utterance, fitted to feeble, receptive powers—food for babes. This it is for the Divine to become incarnate, to veil itself in flesh. What wisdom, therefore, is requisite to discern and use this wisdom, to understand and justify this obscure, but only possible, revelation. The heart and mind must be alive with a divine light and insight to enter into the divinity of Christ. To thousands of souls so alive, it does daily and hourly confirm, by the glory with which it clothes itself, and the quiet, untiring lead it takes in guiding them upward, its own largest claims.

There seem to be some imperative rational conditions of a revelation of God in Christ. The humiliation, that is the lowly guise, the straitened truths, the humble procedure, the slow giving, must be accepted as alone sufficient to bring the truth near enough to us, and to unite it to our lives. We have little power to apprehend spiritual things, and still less to use them. Our faculties are incipient. God descends then till he meets us on the low level of life, on the conditions offered by the incarnation. Once on this level, the truths which can be enunciated are those only which are there and then conformable with it. If the truths unfolded are transcendent in certain bearings of them, they are also, in other relations, interlocked with the thoughts of men, and have an instant hold on their action. We must look, then, for the proofs of the divinity of Christ offered by his character, remembering that they are subjected to these rigorous restrictions, are full of perplexity, and easily misconceivable. We search for the truth, knowing that the truth when found must owe its glory to its interior force, and receive little or no aid from its sordid conditions and narrow forms; that we are dealing with germs whose full strength can only be disclosed by thousands of years of growth; that we are thrown back on our

own power to penetrate moral beauty, and pronounce upon it.

So conceiving the conditions under which the divine forces are unfolded in the life of Christ, let us look at that life for indications of its nature. It is the moral or spiritual powers of man that call for development, those powers by which he discerns the true scope of his being, and the law implanted in it. What the universe is to the intellect of man, that God is to his spiritual affections. The divinity of Christ is disclosed, it seems to us, in the fact that he makes so pure and single an appeal to the moral nature. There are no divisions, no distractions here ; the words and life of Christ are all directed to our spiritual apprehensions, and quicken and deepen them with wonderful and inexhaustible vigor. The motives, the impressions, which accompany wealth, rank, power, display, are entirely laid aside. They could have no other effect than to disguise the purely personal, spiritual force of the truths to be presented. Nothing could be more stripped of external adjuncts, more devoid of factitious aids, than were the actions and instructions of Christ. When the moral element in him began at any time indirectly to gather and involve lower elements, when crowds were assembling, excitement spreading, and disciples multiplying, he carefully broke the flow of events, scattered the alien, conflicting forces, and got back again to solitude and a purely moral position. That this method involves the highest wisdom, yet one not at all consonant with hasty, eager, ambitious, human thoughts, is evident. Truth, as spiritual, supersensual, is most frequently lost among men by being hidden, overlaid with sensible, immediate interests, with excitements, with social considerations. The mind is never left more absolutely alone with simple truth than by the words of Christ. How alien this method is to human

thought is seen in the fact, that Celsus early offered it as an objection to Christianity.

A kindred fact in the method of Christ is that he makes no use of philosophy as philosophy, nor seeks to enlarge knowledge as knowledge. The intellect, while called into high activity, is engaged not primarily in its own interests, but in those of the spiritual intuitions. Herein is a yet stronger temptation escaped, and one which a mind moving on a purely human plane would hardly look upon as a temptation, might naturally enough regard as an opportunity. Spiritual philosophy, new truths in the domain of theology, systematized principles of conduct, these are the best contributions of the individual mind, and it can not, therefore, easily be held aloof from them. They are, indeed, involved in the instruction of Christ, but they are not evolved; they are held as science is in the facts of nature. The words of Christ are as devoid of the purely speculative character, of the discipleship of belief which attends on an active, constructive intellect, as they are of conventional influences. They are fragmentary, positive, practical, popular, and are left by their own force to shift for themselves. A most marked characteristic of his instruction is its consistent, yet sporadic, cast; its power of attaching itself to facts. His words have an occasion, and the occasion sets limits to the lesson, and gives the key of its interpretation. Even the Sermon on the Mount is the knitting together of many occasions, and the uniting of a series of lessons, each pertinent to the peculiar condition of the audience. Its announcements are vivid flashes of light, which each mind is left to use as it can. The seeds of thought and action are dropped by Christ together in the soil, as its condition gives him opportunity. This is the purely spiritual or moral method. If thought is separated from action, instruction lapses into philosophy.

Or if action is urged, it is action without the insight and impulse that should inform and shape it ; a ritual is instituted, or a creed set up, more and more divorcing themselves from the life. The germs of a truly spiritual product must hold in even balance both elements, the emotional and the intellectual, unfolding themselves in constant interaction along a line of conduct. This balance we have in the words of Christ ; he leaves on the right and the left every other path, and steadily pursues the one simple, spiritual method, which can vindicate itself only to a long time and to large discernment. This peculiar feature in the instructions of Christ puts his life and teachings among the most permanent and unchangeable of moral powers, allies them to nature, whose principles are inlocked with facts, and held firm by them.

As closely connected with this separation of the words of Christ from all influences in the least alien to them, or liable to embarrass or obscure them, may be mentioned their positive form. His truths are stated and used in an authoritative, popular way. Science draws the mind from particulars to systematic, coherent, underlying principles ; it looks inward to the dependencies of truth. Popular discourse reverses the movement. It looks outward ; it presents the principle in a specific application ; it announces its proposition, and reflects probability and authority on it by its uses. It expounds and applies the truth in the same act ; and we infer what it is by what it does. Our attention is not directed to the light as light, but by the light we see the things it reveals. This positive method is especially applicable to spiritual truths, and safe as used with the highest insight. Spiritual truths hold the two elements, emotional and intellectual, in even, sympathetic action, and this they can only do by virtue of conduct. Combined otherwise than in action, the light and the heat,

the revelation and the inspiration, of the truths of our higher nature are lost. Neither constituent can be long held without the other, nor can they be otherwise blended evenly and beautifully than in conduct. The words of Christ, therefore, as popular, are complete in structure, are the *fertile* seeds of conduct, can enlarge in thought and deepen in emotion, doing both by a normal growth. They are also sure of a relatively correct interpretation, and can retain their vital force for successive generations. The principle is attached to its appropriate fact in action, and the two balance and expound each other. We can hardly miss the truth, for it has a double definition in words and in events. Its position and direction are both given ; the one corrects the other, and the orbit of a noble life is laid down.

This vigor and certainty, yet expansiveness and depth, of the positive method, the method that appeals most directly and vigorously to the soul of man, are well seen in Christ's treatment of the woman taken in adultery. There is here very little exposition, no guiding propositions are laid down, there is no ground given for controversy ; yet in a guarded, practical way, the most significant hints of character are made. The unforgiving severity of the Pharisees is rebuked, their hypocrisy is exposed, the woman is censured and forgiven, and the supreme end of law made manifest, to wit : to save society and rescue the criminal. Sympathetic mercy and stern censure proceed even-handed in the words of Christ, and it is difficult to pervert either of them from their purpose. A scientific statement would not have hit so exactly, so concisely, so safely, so suggestively, the case ; nor been left open to the same free, progressive use. In the beginning it would have spoken more obscurely, and, in the end, more rigidly. The mind and heart are left to see, to feel, and to expand

the truth, and can hardly find fault therefore with their own work.

The instructions of Christ constantly involve principles, and rarely accept the restriction of precepts ; they indicate the spirit which is to shape the action, and do not often delineate the action itself. Principles call forth, in the first instance, a much more comprehensive activity of mind than do precepts, and, in their expansion, are left wholly to the wisdom and good-will of those who use them. Precepts are the badges of ignorance and servitude, no matter how wise they are ; principles are the assistance which one mind gives another, in an independent use of the truth. Principles nourish alike the intellectual and voluntary faculties, while precepts bend them to a following which may easily lapse into blind obedience. When we obey the precept, the impelling power is in another's will, the wisdom in another's thought ; when we accept the principle, the insight and the impulse rest with us. Precepts are inflexible and suffer from an exterior, formal tendency that separates them more and more from the variable, moral conditions of life. Pursuing their own path they gradually part from the exigencies of the time, the duties of the hour, the conditions of growth. It is impossible for precepts sufficiently to forecast the future, and hence the devotee, sent off in a straight line of formal service, departs more and more from self-centered social life, and shapes an experience increasingly barren in wholesome, living results. A system of rules, rites, dogmas, a mechanism of any kind, must be repeatedly revolutionized to restore them to harmony with that general society in which they are to operate.

From organization, from precepts, rituals and dogmas, the ostensible means by which men are bound to a cause and a leader, Christ turns wholly aside. He lodges the

principles of action, the germs of truth, in the heart and mind, and leaves each person to make a free, flexible use of them. Liberty, without declaration or ostentation, is made a cardinal feature of his method. The primary sacraments of the Christian church are few and simple, and take upon themselves no uniform preceptive outline ; while its chief organic relations were left by Christ to be shaped historically and progressively. We have striven to narrow this our freedom, but there it remains, in spite of us, only emphasized by our conflicting claims. The Christian Sabbath and the Christian church are so feebly defined, that we may easily deny them any formal definition, and must search our own spiritual constitution for their best supports. What greater constructive freedom could be given to the Christian spirit than is given by the words of Christ, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." He avoids guarding and narrowing this declaration, but leaves it with its full distinctive and constructive energy in it. He thus puts, even in reference to this most general, positive and venerable precept, the Christian soul afresh into possession of itself, and the entire field of moral action. This is not to abolish the Sabbath, but to restore it in men's thoughts to a constitutional, a natural, basis.

The instructions of Christ which have the narrowness in form of precepts must yet be used with a fresh rendering of them into principles. His injunction, "Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also," is of this nature. Employed unreservedly, as a positive command, it undoes the constructive laws of society, its organic rights and duties ; resolved into a temper of mind, a principle of forgiveness in the soul's private economy, and it bears with it the patience and healing love of Christ. The definition of a neighbor and the duties of

the relation are given in this same narrow, yet broad, way in the parable of the good Samaritan. The principle is enclosed in an illustration, and the concluding injunction, "Go and do thou likewise," is to be obeyed in the spirit of the act narrated. We are awakened to guide ourselves by what is implied in the words of Christ, rather than directly guided by them. It is not till the mind has dwelt on them, and gotten hold of their spirit, that it can begin its profiting. They are spirit and they are life.

The instructions of Christ being thus spiritual more than intellectual, or conjointly intellectual and spiritual, aroused affections are essential to their comprehension and use. As a consequence, they carry greater force and receive deeper meaning with every advanced stage of our experience. Our spiritual states are the lenses which, with perpetual improvement and readjustment, bring into more perfect outline the conceptions, the revelations breaking forth from the mind of Christ. The dry, cold light of the intellect does not avail for these teachings. There is heat in them, and the light by which they are to be comprehended is largely incident to that heat. The words of Christ addressed to Peter are of this character. "Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my church." Looked at on a low plane of dry statement, they are misleading; regarded from a higher plane, with insight into the living dependencies of truth, and Peter, the personification of the confession which had just fallen from his lips, becomes the foundation-stone in the kingdom. To see the revelation of God in Christ, and rejoice in it, is to stand in the morning light of the coming day. If we start off with the words of Christ at too low an emotional level, we find ourselves perplexed, baffled, misled; starting from the moral elevation from which they themselves have sprung, we glide serenely out into a clear, open sky. Birds,

with a faltering instinct, dash themselves against the light-house and perish ; if they could only, unbewildered, thread the night by its beams, they should find in them safety and good cheer.

The sudden impulse of spiritual life given by Christ to his instructions is seen in the unexpected answer he gave to those who said to him, that his kindred without desired to speak with him. "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother." There is thus an instantaneous power and expansion imparted to Christian sympathies, by which, like rising waters, they engulf all emotions. The parable of the prodigal son, with the complaint of the older brother ; and that of the workmen, hired at different hours into the vineyard, with their complaint of injustice to the master, are an exposure of justice as a barren basis of life, are assertions set up in behalf of freedom, of the affections, and their right to their own warm, native movement.

The words of Christ are often destructive, extreme, undeveloped. The iconoclastic phrase, It hath been said of them of old time, but I say unto you, gives tone to the Sermon on the Mount. The law of God, in its true spiritual power, was made to confront the tradition of the elders concerning service withheld from parents and consecrated as a gift to God ; while their purifications were brushed aside with the assertion, "There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him." These were such inroads in the Jewish ceremonial as looked to its annihilation. His language is extreme. The proselyting of the Jews is the making of converts who are twofold more the children of hell. Every idle word is made a ground

of divine judgment ; and guilt under the law at one point is pronounced guilt at every point. His words are often undeveloped. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven." "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he can not be my disciple." Contrast this passage with the one above, in which these same affections are made the type of our spiritual love. A method like this is the boldest appeal to thought ; nothing can be made of it without thought, and the liberty thought involves. A dangerous weapon is put in the hand of the neophyte, one with which he may injure himself or another, and he is compelled to learn its uses. Think ; at your peril, think : take the hint given and pursue it wisely, this is the tacit injunction. "He that has ears to hear let him hear." "Do ye not understand this parable, how then can ye understand all parables !" Speaking by parables is a method directly advanced by Christ as one fitted to hide the truth from the indolent and ill-disposed ; and to disclose it to attentive, concessive minds. Hasty discipleship Christ diligently shuns. Those who follow him must wittingly forsake all. The multitudes are sent back to their homes. The young man, commendable in virtue, and eager for the new service, is tested at the most tender point, his great possessions. The symbol of fellowship with Christ is the shoulder cruelly laden with a cross. Christ seems willing that the Pharisees should be impressed by his words as parables, riddles and contradictions, rather than that they should be allowed to hastily take them up either in superficial acceptance or rejection. "Therefore speak I to them in parables ; because they seeing see not ; and hearing, they hear not ; neither do they understand."

We wonder at times at the enigmatical character of his

instructions. The slow, literal mind seems harshly treated. There is hardly the accommodation, the gentleness, the consideration we should expect. There is no effort to grade down the ascent to truth. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." "This is my body." We are ready to ask, why should Luther and many another devout man be left to stumble over such words, lying as an obstacle in the path of the literalist? Yet the method is justified, and more than justified, to the penetrative, spiritual mind. Thus only could the downward, short-sighted, groping instincts of semi-enlightened natures be met and overcome. It is a war against the letter in behalf of the spirit, against outer guidance in behalf of inner light; a submission of forms to the changeable, living impulses which should control them. No method is more remote from immediate success, a large, instant and enthusiastic following, than this; and there is none that can so renew itself from generation to generation, carry its resources with it, and, at each shift, so grapple the mind and heart with fresh and enlarged energy. Its detachment from the present is its command of the future.

The instructions of Christ are thus in the highest degree constructive, with a patient, protracted, growing power. There is a fundamental principle of action in them expressed in the words, "Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it;" a sympathetic and living impulse under that action, disclosed in the words, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him;" and a goal of action, an organic harmony of action, included in the great command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." The life of Christ thus becomes an example of right living; the cross of Christ the symbol of

right living ; the resurrection and rule of Christ the victory and promise of right living, a living that, complete in itself, vanquishes death, and bears away its spoils. Destruction is showy and easy, construction is the test of strength. The deeper, broader, more sufficient the new life evoked, the greater the miracle. The miracle of Christ is the possession of a life, and the imparting of a life, that enters into the life of God.

Christ handles boldly, freely the natural and supernatural. The supernatural is never allowed to push the natural from its pedestal, to cast into the dust the solid, symmetrical, beautiful work of God in nature. At this point came the first and second temptation to Christ, to turn stones into bread, to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple ; to let the miracle have way in and over nature. At this point fanaticism and overthrow oftenest find entrance in religion. It is forgotten that grace is a victory in nature not over nature, that God's work is not at war with itself, that the natural conditions of salvation define it by his own ordinance. The grounds for rational, systematic and symmetrical inquiry and action are thus left to man, and the supernatural expends itself along the lines of the natural, under the constitution from the beginning ordained of God. This restraint of Christ, this working within the spiritual powers of the mind, may at first disguise his divinity, at length it discloses it. It is not in any supernatural brilliancy that his glory abides, but in this quiet, ineffable fullness of his own character.

On the other hand Christ is not fearful of the supernatural ; he has no scientific nervousness on this point ; he approaches it as a master. He withholds signs, and censures the wonder-loving, sign-seeking temper, but he deals freely from a spiritual, supersensual position with the physical and moral problems before him. He does not allow

the physical to build itself up either in independence of, or opposition to, the spiritual. He causes the spiritual to touch and visibly to control the physical. He thus lays as deeply the foundations of faith as of prudence, and gives belief the range of both worlds. Herein he seems to us to have steadily preserved that straight line of wisdom which divides superstition and science, the spirit which was in his time and the spirit which is in our time, the partial and opposing movements to which the mind of man is subject. Christ without miracles would have been an anomaly, a fresh hiding, rather than a fresh disclosure, of the invisible world; Christ, a wonder-worker, would have been one more marvel in a world already misled by a thousand false lights. Light, measured light, light for guidance, for work and for faith, for labor and for encouragement, as we march through the darkness, seems to us the divine ministration of Christ, standing between two worlds to both of which he and we belong. A light, therefore, from above must fall upon him, and that light must go forth from him in its mild, normal nature.

Such is somewhat of the inherent character of the teachings of Christ, the vigor that is in them. They carefully put aside every sensational, partial element; they are boldly, strongly moral; they seek no extraneous aid from wealth, station, popular eclat, or serene speculation; they are uncompromising toward adversaries, deep and searching toward adherents, penetrating, thoughtful, even to obscurity, toward all. They concede nothing to indolence or indifference. There is in them not one partisan, popular or fanatical element, save as so deep, earnest, and separate a movement must itself have seemed at times to approach fanaticism. This very peculiar, clearly devised and steadily maintained method of Christ was pursued under circumstances provoking every moment the opposite

error. He was dealing with purely religious questions, in a bigoted, fanatical, excitable nation, in a relatively superstitious era, at a period when influence must either turn on visible, extraneous forces, or be vigorously sustained by them. A purely moral movement was as difficult of conception as of execution. No germ of control could then spring up without gathering to itself these factitious aids, without the instant temptation to expand it by these ordinary methods of increase.

Yet the teachings of Christ remain from the beginning to the end with the same simple, single, moral force, and are left to do their own work by their own innate power. The form of his life, his words to the people, and his esoteric instruction in the circle of his disciples, bear alike the one transcendental impress of a spiritual nature. There is at no time and in no place a single trace of creed, ritual or organization. All is hazarded on the primitive power of truth, and all is left to it. The result has been that this living seed has been again and again partially overwhelmed, that it has perished over large fields and through long periods, that it has lost every advantage save its own force, and yet, kept alive in quiet nooks, it has suddenly reappeared on old and worn-out soil and in new territory. To-day it grows as thriftily as ever. The inner life and full moral vigor of the words of Christ are there, and are more clearly apprehended by more minds than ever before in the world's history. The Kingdom of Christ advances. The miracles recede into the past, and suffer from its obscurity ; Christ, as a divine person, comes to the foreground, and gathers all the light of the opening years. He, divinely natural, sustains the supernatural that attends upon him.

Here is a marvel. Instructions which so transcend the period in which they were uttered as to provoke every

kind of perversion and repression, have yet possessed such innate vigor that they have ruled it and subsequent ages, equally in their false as in their true forms; seeds that have borne the violence and wash of intervening years still spring up from under the débris with more vitality, more delicacy of form, than ever before, beginning anew to put forth the beauty and the strength that are in them. I know not what a moral kingdom, what a divine revelation, should be unless they are such a kingdom and such a revelation as these. These complete, heroic, moral proportions are, in the history of our race, found in Christ only, traits which in their courage lose nothing of tenderness, and in their tenderness never miss the firm edge of courage.

The wonder is triple, that words so purely moral should not have perished at once from the crass earth, unable to root anywhere; that taking root they were not sooner or later smothered and lost by the manifold, persistent, overshadowing fungi of superstition and passion that fastened and fed on them; that, springing up again in these remote times and places, they show more than the beauty and vigor of youth. By virtue of these facts Christ is to all believers and unbelievers the one divine figure that leads the spiritual history of the race. "A matchless man," says Renan, "so grand that although here all must be judged from a purely scientific point of view, I would not gainsay those who, struck with the exceptional character of his work, call him God."* "Even to-day rationalism dares not look at him closely except on its knees."†

There are, indeed, a few who sincerely, though it seems to us very mistakingly, criticise the character of Christ in its moral perfection. Francis W. Newman, whose works

* Religious History and Criticism, p. 161.

† Ibid, p. 213.

are marked by a candid and earnest spirit, in his Phases of Faith, speaks in this way of Christ, disclosing as he thinks some minor blemishes of temper. "The aim of Jesus was not so much to enlighten the young man as to stop his mouth, and keep up his own ostentation of omniscience."^{*} The circumstances under which the words of Christ were spoken are not given with a sufficiently strong and clear outline for us to decide at once and peremptorily on their fitness and temper. If we suppose one phase of character in the person addressed, the language may seem harsh, if another, it may wholly and easily justify itself. His manner toward the Syro-Phœnician woman strikes one as repellant; yet we find that its ostensible character was the reverse of its real character. So much depends on the way in which words are spoken, that, missing the intonation, we should speak with hesitancy of their spirit. The uniform, compassionate and tender character of Christ's instructions makes it but ordinary justice to accord to him the manner, and to presume those phases of character, which tone down his words to wisdom and love. The above criticism seems to us unfair and presumptuous. Certainly the supposition is natural and probable, in reference to the young ruler, that with all his virtue he was thoroughly attached to his conventional views, to his wealth and to his rank, and that a sufficiently deep issue could not otherwise be taken with him so clearly, quickly and conveniently as by the words of Christ. The more nearly he approximated the truth, while missing it, the more decisive was the test needed to disclose to him the radical, yet hidden, discrepancy. There is indeed a startling thoroughness in the command, "Go and sell that thou hast," but we can easily believe it to have been the most considerate, faithful and kind language, fitted to deter the

young man from a useless, half-hearted discipleship, and force him to a complete work.

The severity with which Christ denounced the Pharisees requires also the explanation of a predominant, unsparing religious purpose. An open, violent separation of his instruction in spirit and aim from those of the Pharisees was a first necessity. Only thus could his doctrines and his disciples be isolated, aggregated, and prepared to make head as an independent power. In the same degree in which Christ cast aside external distinctions, must he insist on internal ones. Existence, a free footing, call for, must often cost, severe blows. Many things, even things better than those about them, must be dealt with unsparingly, because they lie as the immediate obstacle in the way of progress. It was this temper of mind, which falls to a prophet who must not only speak the truth, but plant it ; who must not only save his own soul, but organize the forces that are to work salvation in others, that led Christ to exclaim, "I am come to send fire on the earth ; and what will I if it be already kindled ? But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished ! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth ? I tell you, Nay, but rather division." The courtesies and gracious concessions of life can play no great part in such a mission.

The supposition that Christ was in any sense a pretender, deserves no consideration. The inherent contradictions of character incident to it are as great as they could be. No hypothesis could be more fully refuted by the facts it undertakes to explain. The only suppositions that remain are, that his declarations concerning himself are the sober truth, or that they sprang from an element of fanaticism in him. This element, if admitted at all, must enter in an extreme, decided form ; since he claims

at once to be sinless, and the Son of God. What he meant by these last words is sufficiently plain by the impression he made by them. That impression was one of blasphemy, and blasphemy of so decided a character as to carry with it the penalty of death. The institution of such a claim, and the quiet adherence to it when made by the Sanhedrim the ground of a capital accusation, imply either its truthfulness, or an inordinate fanaticism. The contradictions of this last supposition are only less than those which would belong to him as a pretender. If we accept the essential correctness of the Gospel narratives,—and if we do not, we shall be utterly at a loss to account for their sobriety and coherence, arising as they do at diverse periods and with diverse authors ; utterly at a loss to account for a picture so much beyond the powers of those who painted it—then the features we have dwelt on in the words of Christ, their pure moral power, their wise penetrative character, their separation from all factitious influences, their direct appeal to the reason, are such as could not belong to one deeply tinged with fanaticism, and that, too, in an arrogant and profane form. It is impossible to entertain a fanaticism of this dye without a disclosure of it everywhere. Such combinations, such contradictions, are not found in human experience. No mind is at once sober and penetrative beyond its own and every other age, and at the same time fanatical up to the last point of assumption. Fanaticism, if not sin, is disease, and can not be perfectly local ; it has in it a taint and a fever heat quite beyond what this view recognizes.

Nothing but a strong predisposition to deny the divinity of Christ would lead us to this conclusion, a predisposition allied to that against miracles, causing many to struggle with the plain, historic character of the Gospels. As we share neither of these prejudices, we can not

have much sympathy with the distortions they give rise to. Our philosophy prepares us for a quiet acceptance of the supernatural, and we can, therefore, allow proof pertaining to it to have its natural force. Our feeling is not that of Renan: "Who is not pained to see the wonder-worker by the side of the sublime moralist, to find in the Gospels, on the same page with the Sermon on the Mount, or the discourse at the Supper, stories of men possessed, which, if invented in our time, would meet nothing but incredulity or a smile."*

Difficulties necessarily attend upon an incarnation. Divine powers can not appear on the level of ordinary natural forces without disturbance and partial obscurity, without restrictions which to the unwise may seem soil. The river can not overpass its banks and retain its tranquillity. That explanation, that conception, struggling to gather up the known and the unknown in harmony, is the best which proceeds most simply, and puts the new manifestation in most direct connection with the old. Christ does not appear under the conditions of our life, but under those of two thousand years ago. His first word was to that generation, his first interpretation by that generation. It is as foolish a piece of assumption to claim that he should take up our modern science, as it would be that he should have based his action on that of two thousand years hence. The question simply is, shall truth be lost to a defective present by being removed into an unapproachable future, or shall that future be called on to gather its truth along a historic past?

If we believe in a personal God, and one who has a double method of revelation, in the natural and the supernatural, in matter and in mind, in that which is addressed to us as beings trained to work, and that which is ad-

* Religious History and Criticism, p. 221.

dressed to us as beings taught to trust and love, then the coming of Christ is supported by the entire method of Heaven, and is the culmination of the two revelations. His character and mission as much demand the supernatural as the natural, as he is, in his own being, deeply supernatural, and purposes to put us into a more living connection with the invisible and spiritual. While he is not, by the least, to lift us out of nature, he is to lift us and nature into a closer, more conscious contact with God ; and this under the conditions of thought then current. No scientific attitude, no speculative astuteness, no philosophical ideal, fell to Christ ;—they are each too narrow—but an incarnation of spiritual truth, a close living contact of the love of God with humanity, a disclosure of the true force of the religious nature. Simple acceptance of current intellectual and social conditions, and a revelation under them of moral truth and religious love, were alone in order. A theory about devils was no more a perplexity than a theory about government ; Jewish demonology than Jewish sociology ; nor to be treated in a different way. We do not say that all difficulties disappear under this view of the incarnation, but that the character of Christ stands in easy harmony with it, and his words are left by it to shed the most undisturbed light.

On the other hand, we are involved in the deepest perplexity, if we attempt to escape the supernatural in Christ. These threads are so many, and so woven into the first web, that if we draw them, the whole fabric becomes loose and flimsy to the last degree, and is soon flung aside. The miracles are not detached events here and there, they are everywhere. The instructions of Christ grow out of them, and lead to them. His most stimulating truths of clearest insight find occasion in them, as in the work of healing wrought on the Sabbath. The transfiguration of

Christ, the cure of the lunatic that followed it, the conversation with the woman of Samaria, are illustrations of the indissoluble way in which the two elements blend in his character. We can not save one without the other ; our analysis is destructive. We do not pretend to say how far contradictions may enter into human action, but a great and symmetrical character can neither be torn apart in its constitution, nor cut asunder, without destroying utterly the life it expresses. Christ's character and teachings, transcendent as they are, are knit together with a most constant and complete, complex and delicate, union of the natural and supernatural, and we must take them or leave them for what they are in their own inherent consistency. The words of Christ are utterly alien to the modern scientific spirit, are built upon the idea of a hidden, spiritual faith, and can not be saved with any show of integrity, unless we also accept this their underlying principle.

We may speak of him, if we will, as a wonder-worker, a dealer with familiar spirits, but no two things could be more at war with each other than the sobriety and practical force of his teachings, and the conceptions of character which science attaches to these words. It was some such substitution of ideas, some such obscuration of the supernatural by the sub-natural, that was the fatal, blinding sin of the Pharisees. It is only when we admit the supernatural as a glorious and crowning fact in the spiritual world, that this contradiction passes away, this collision of the best and worst in character, giving rise to the pain spoken of by Renan, disappears, and Christ stands again before us with undimmed aureola.

If it be urged that there is little or no effort on the part of Christ to lift up and restrict the supernatural, to put it on a rational basis, but that he accepts it under the perversions of his time, its demoniacs, its human and its

animal possessions, we answer, this is also in accordance with the true spirit of his teachings, if we admit the great, underlying truth, the supernatural presence of God in the world. It no more falls to him to give an exact rendering of the doctrine of demoniacal possessions than that of the resurrection, or of the relation of the soul to the body. A diversion from his purpose could have been made at this point as easily as at another, nay, more easily; and the moral force of his words been evaporated into a thau-maturgic theory, or what would have so presented itself to others. Christ systematically left the separation of the true and the false, in current opinion and action, to follow on under the dividing power of leading principles, and so allowed the details of truth to be settled as they always must be, by its great issues. We see no reason why in this instance he should have done differently; or why he should have been more anxious on this topic to prevent mistake, or to anticipate progress, than on many others. Christ, as a scientist on this theme, would have had less not more moral power, would have been less near to his primary purpose, to touch with a living spirit the life then current, to anticipate neither one nor another change of opinion, but to give the germinant truths of development. Side discussions once opened, there would have been no end to the diversion of thought. No other method was possible. If growth was to be forestalled in one particular, then should it have been in all, and the goal and the starting point been made to touch each other. What I may call the spiritual costume of Christ, involving as it does no complicity with sin, ought no more to disturb us than his Jewish features, or Jewish mantle. This yearning for an intellectual ideal proceeds in ignorance of the purpose of the incarnation, and its method of fulfillment. Christ, in filling out any one intellectual conception, would

have become the Christ of a sect, or a class, or a period, and so would have missed every other sect and class and period. There is no intellectual state, in fine-drawn speculative features, that can be admissible and ideal to all generations. Christ truly humbled himself, that is submitted himself, to that which he professed to accept and spiritually transfigure, human life under its then conditions. It is enough that he planted the truths which have been fruitful in all later harvests.

We have proceeded on the supposition that demoniacal possession is an absurdity, and that science has a plain, sufficient, and contradictory truth to put in its place. This is conceding more than the facts of the case call for; great mystery envelops the relation of the mind and its physical organs, and he is a bold speculator who will assert what is and what is not possible in this region, what has and what has not been. Whatever we shall find good reason to believe on this subject, the moral penetration and integrity of Christ are no more implicated here than in his attitude toward the marginal facts of another existence, a personal and supreme devil, the mysteries of death and the resurrection, a future life—all that he leaves more or less under the shadow of current opinion.

If now, pushing aside this conception of Christ, denying the validity of the supernatural, we allow the deepest tinge of fanaticism to enter into his character, we have at once forced upon us the most painful contradictions. The vainest and the blindest methods in morals are made to meet the highest and the clearest, and the two grow together and out of each other. We may then well ask with Renan, "If, as the Italian sophists of the sixteenth century maintained, religion had been invented by the simple and the weak, how comes it that the finest nations are precisely the most religious?" How comes it that

those most deeply imbued with the pure light of a spiritual reason, those lifted highest above superstition, find their best inspiration in the words of Christ? It is because there are in his teachings the clearest reason, the most penetrative and abiding truth, because he himself saw this truth, and left it with us for the very ends of slow, undisturbed, race-regeneration.

Each departure from the simple sincerity of Christ begets new difficulties, and drives us back again to our first position. So has the criticism of the world found it hitherto. Christ as a fanatic is more unmanageable in thought than Christ the Son of God. The character of Christ as the slow creation of misled disciples is a greater wonder than Christ, a divine person. At each departure our forces are less adequate to the work assigned them, and that beauty is best explained in its enduring power by its divine spirit. We are thus left simply in the presence of great, proportionate, wonderful things, of wonderful origin; we are not obliged to attribute them to blind fanaticism, or low cunning, or superstition, entering always as a dry rot into character. We can more easily believe in the noble when left in its noble proportions, sources and services; and this we find it good to do. The crude, mistaken and insincere, neither help nor explain our picture. And thus only do we get revelation, salvation from it. On these conditions it ceases to be a mirage, and discloses redemptive and divine love, rests on our near horizon as the foreshadowing image of Heaven.

If asked to push our analysis into the constitution of Christ, and separate again the human and divine elements, we may, as lacking sufficient data, wisely and consistently decline to do it. This doctrine of the divine nature of Christ, like that of the trinity, should be left flexible, as otherwise easily slipping into difficulties we need not have

raised, and, having raised, have no means at hand to remove. Our wisdom lies in declining statements which narrow or trammel our faith, or transcend the conditions of proof; and in never imposing on others those passing conceptions which combine for us most easily our convictions. Whether Christ, the God-man, found his limitations exclusively in the physical conditions of humanity, or farther in a distinct human personality; whether he was the passing manifestation of one being, God, or the permanent, genetic union of two beings, God and man, are inquiries so purely speculative, that if we have a right to make them, we have no right to enforce our answers to them. The private economy of each man's thought admits much which can play no part in theology. That conception, half image, half deduction, is for us the best, which is the most simple, flexible, undefined, and leaves us in the most immediate presence of God, waiting on a farther revelation rather than scrutinizing the method of the one already made. Christ, the Divine One, is as true to our feeling as the friend at our side, and his words as easily glide into our life. We would not banish him, then, by a conjecture as to his make-up, any more than we would discard our friend by an idealistic speculation as to his real being. We use our philosophy to gather, not to scatter our facts, our truths. We rule out the psychology of Christ as one of dogmatic statement, and restore it among those shifting conceptions which subserve their purpose, when left to be shaped by airy thoughts to the personal, intellectual ends which evoke them; when carrying the mind forward with least contradiction to the essential truths of Revelation. It is not his constitution that Christ expounds, it is not to this that his instruction points. He asserts his divinity only as the guarantee of his authority as he proceeds to matters more nearly level with our wants. We may certainly

speculate as to the constitution of Christ,—nothing is profane to a reverent spirit—and our theories are more or less admissible as they harmoniously embrace the human and divine, and lay no bonds of assertion on either in so new a relation. Sufficient and final these speculations can not be, pertaining as they do to facts quite beyond experience. The solution which presents the least difficulty to us is that which makes the Divine Soul, the Divine Life, the true life of Christ, and then accepts its manifestation under the limitations of a true incarnation. The narrow bounds of a human body, the bounds to acquisition, comprehension, action, implied in infantile life, passing by normal growth into manhood, impose the formal conditions under which the Divine Life expresses itself. It is the very problem of an incarnation that the Divine inflatus shall not overpass or submerge these its bounds. The Divine is not to tear and shatter, like a demon, the human with which it allies itself; and this human is found in the relation of our physical and spiritual constitutions, inseparable from and defining each other. The form and the force of this new life are respectively human and divine. This allows us to suppose that the truths of science were no more instantly, persistently, before the mind of Christ, than were the facts of nature before his eyes. We must not in one breath grant and deny the restrictions of humanity because of the misty margin along which the two elements blend. We accept the human, we accept the Divine, both as real; we know not how to compound them with precision; we suspect the best image to be, a human soul with the largest inspiration of the Almighty.

We now pass to the plainer inquiry, the purposes of this incarnation. Comprehensive as these are, we look upon them all as moral, vital, and in no sense formal. In

Christ there are new forces, truths, affections introduced into our spiritual world, forces which work by their own efficiency, according to their own law, to their own ends. Christ works by what he was and is and did and said, and, like other living souls, carries his power with him, imparting intellectual comprehension and spiritual affinity. We exclude from the purposes of the incarnation all formal adjustments under the divine government, all make-shifts of law, all purely judicial ends. Christ, it seems to us, affects the state of men and alters their relation to God only as he alters them, and by vital, spiritual powers restores their thoughts, quickens their affections, and deepens and cleanses the fountains of spiritual life. No force is more independent, more self-sufficient, more conditioned to protracted activity and quiet growth than that which is contained in the words and works of Christ. No limitations are laid upon it by a law outside itself. The Word is God.

We do not historically find any sufficient ground for the reference to Christ of a definite, judicial, vicarious work, a work turning on positive commands, governmental rewards and punishments, exigencies of restraint, and not on the normal conditions of good and evil under our moral constitution. We see no proof in history that it was a hitch in law in the restricted sense, an entanglement of penalties, that was removed by Christ; but we are led to believe that it was a new, higher, more spiritual footing that was given us by him, to which there were incident new escapes from under the letter of law, new joys and freedom in its spirit.

The sacrifices of the Old Testament were methods of approach to God, of expression and instruction in worship, which owed their adoption in the Israelitish ritual to their general prevalence and intrinsic fitness. Israel was

trained under familiar forms by accepted, and so by comprehensible methods. A ritual can not have a spiritual elevation alien to those who are subject to it. Its ideas and their expression must be deeply, historically, incorporated into the conceptions of those who are to profit by it. Rites more than truths need a historic support. Sacrifices came to the Israelites with their natural force and with acquired associations, and though varied and deeper meanings would be slowly added to them, the starting point of discipline would be found in the old and familiar use. Only thus do rites grow. There may be marked transitions from one religious culture to another, but there can be no leap, no breaking of the new with the old, no emancipation that removes the traces of previous servitude.

The primary, the natural force of a sacrifice is that of a gift, a thing consecrated. This character it has equally and directly, whether it consists of animals slain at an altar or of the fruits of the field. A rendering of gifts to God, and so of worship to him, lies at the foundation of sacrifice as its first significance, and admits freely of that variety of offerings which belonged to the Jewish ritual. We have no reason to suppose that a bloody sacrifice would have in the outset any deeper meaning than one of fruits or grains. The sufferings of animals would hardly appeal to the feelings of rude herdsmen as a distinct element in the transaction, nor the taking of life be regarded as other than an ordinary, incidental circumstance. The gift of property would be the telling fact, and one controlled in its form by the possessions of the suppliant. Ideas of purification and appeasing, as associated with the shedding of blood, would be a later growth of symbolism.

The conciliation of God or gods by sacrifice would follow directly on an apprehension of him as angry, and would at once accompany a fearful, sinful, superstitious

and bewildered state, enveloped in the interpretations of human passion. This appeasing, failing to find a deep enough expression in gifts of fruits and sacrifice of animals, by a natural sequence passed on to human sacrifices. The ease with which the Israelites fell into this prevalent rite, discloses its affinity with their thoughts, and their affinity with the nations about them. Human sacrifice would instantly tinge the altar with a deeper hue ; quite new ideas would gather about it, even when its thirsty stones were drenched with the blood of animals merely. Blood would have a more vigorous symbolism, one based on strong, though partially perverted, and misdirected feelings in the human heart. Justice and anger, law and passion, would blend together, and find a mixed symbolism and expression in sacrifice.

Both of these ideas naturally inhering in sacrifice, or easily growing out of it ; first, of a simple gift to God, a grateful, worshipful, prayerful recognition of him ; second, of an appeasing, propitiating, atoning concession to him, finding its fullest utterance in human sacrifice, are alike partial, symbolic truths ; not absolute, adequate ones. God needs no gifts at our hands, and he suffers no appeasing. The gift, and much more the cruel sacrifice, wrought in a coarse, rude, though suggestive, way, in minds obscure and passionate, confounding righteousness with roughly administered law. The simple gift is far better than the bloody infliction in that it is surrounded by fewer false lights, draws the heart quietly within the range of divine grace, with tender suggestion teaches God's true character, and can not so easily be marred by sordid, cruel and implacable passion. Yet it, no more than a bloody sacrifice, is an exact measure of an exact truth. The latter has this advantage,—the sacrifice of animals perchance with the shadow of human sacrifice on it—that

it lays hold in a bolder, stronger way of the wicked heart, has in it more stirring suggestions of real, urgent dangers, and expresses in a partial and deceptive, yet in an effective form, those attributes of God which lie back of righteousness, forever repellant of sin, and hostile to it. An attitude toward God, quite in advance of ordinary, savage indifference, would be induced by a ritual of sacrifices, permeated with both ideas, that of gift and that of propitiation. Yet both views, and the second more than the first, would require constant spiritualizing, the reduction of the sanguine hues of passion, and their replacement by the kinder coloring of grace; that turning of the remote, coarse and symbolical into the near, subtle and real, for the sake of which alone the ritual is instituted. To bring out more and more, in a bald, logical way, the form of relation found in the sacrifices themselves as facts; to drop into rather than off from the barren rendering of barren natures and times, is to pervert the whole Jewish ritual, is to do what the Pharisee did, and what the dogmatist is ever doing. The sacrifices were dissolving spiritual truths, designed to give place by perpetual change to other deeper, fuller truths; they were not stern, rugged outlines to be slowly filled in as the very frame-work of faith. To lay hold of the propitiatory feature, to distend it by simple inflation into a precise legal fact, is to compute the symbol at its point of greatest aberration, is to accept the worst light that human passion had reflected upon it; and to analyze it into its judicial elements, is to make Heaven do on the side of justice what human wickedness had done on the side of passion, pushing the innocent forward into the place of the guilty, shedding the blood of the pure to wash away the stains of sinners. This transfer of the bloody act from the realm of blind, superstitious, cruel fear to that of clear-eyed justice is not

sufficient to alter its character. The symbol is still weak, faltering and false. It is not till we translate the altar language into a true spiritual dialect that we reach its significance, understand moral cleansing, moral burden-bearing, moral sacrifice.

In harmony with this view is the attitude of the prophets toward sacrifices, when, in the hands of a hard-featured, oppressive priesthood, they were settling down into a severe, self-sufficing ritual. "When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moon and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new-moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them."*

If the sacrifice always retained a precise typical value, as a rehearsal of the central fact in the divine government; if it bore both a prophetic and a judicial aspect, this language is certainly not as fitting, as if its efficiency was confined to its moral power. These attacks on the Jewish ritual, these efforts to return to a higher and more flexible rendering, are natural and inevitable, if the prophets regarded sacrifices as a method of worship, partial and suggestive, and of value only as they gave way easily before the truth.

We come here, as we must often come, to the conclusion, that there are no sufficient, final statements of spiritual truths; that these truths are like the sun seen remotely, seen through an intercepting medium, seen by eyes partially blinded by its light, and so inadequately seen, and ever waiting to be better seen, seen under advantages of insight gained by our progress. Those are

* Is. I, 13, compare Mi. 6, 6.

most to be dreaded in religion, as in science, who will not accept the flow of living things, who will not let the present and the past slip easily from under them that they may safely reach the future ; but must needs plant themselves, set up their bounds, and make a Canaan of any ground they chance to occupy. We are in a most profound spiritual sense pilgrims in the world of thought. Nothing is good save as it leads to that which is better, and a thousand things are good on the side of their upward dependence.

While the sacrificial ritual of the Jews was truly religious in guiding the Israelites to a cheerful, worshipful rendering again to God of the things received from him, in suggesting the unyielding claims of obedience, and the heavy penalties of disobedience, it gathered, traveling along this line of central instruction, many secondary powers of expression. The blood, as representing the inscrutable life of the animal, and, as sacrificed at the altar, a life consecrated to God, gained, in natural symbolism a consecrating and so a spiritually cleansing power. The sprinkled blood brought the person or the thing—and as often the thing as the person—into a like state of consecration. That there is here only spiritual speech, a pure symbol, we are taught when it is said, "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins ;" and the breadth of its suggestion, of its interior truth, we are taught, when, in the same connection, it is said of Christ, "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."* There is here in the sacrifice of Christ no altar, no high-priest, no sprinkling with blood, but simply the fellowship of life with life, of life with life in an act of truly sacrificial consecration to God, and thus the actual, spiritual impartation of that

* Heb. 10, 4.

devoted life of which the blood of the altar was but a remote symbol. By a like bold, subtile, suggestive symbolism we take up our crosses and follow after Christ; we are crucified with him, and we rise with him. The safety and force of this and kindred language are found in keeping aloof from the letter, and catching decisively at the spirit. We draw back from the painting till we reach the position in reference to which the colors were laid on; a scrutiny of the canvas close at hand confounds and misleads us. The ritual of the Old Testament, rightly viewed, will guide us, as it was intended to guide the Israelites, into a freer, deeper rendering of our relations to God. We shall not gain precision at the expense of breadth, exactness by a loss of insight, nor a narrow logical coherence at the cost of spiritual affections. The mind, when it has spun a fine, close web of inferences, yields them with reluctance, looks upon the truer solutions of our spiritual life as vague and uncertain, and enters on new liberties and new responsibilities with fear rather than hope.

The conclusions we reach from the Israelitish ritual are these: Its sacrifices were at once natural and familiar methods of worship, discipline and instruction. A variety of ideas attended upon them, and other ideas were capable of easy development from them. Among these was the notion of propitiation, the appeasing of an angry God; expressed on the side of law, the placating of a just God; as still farther softened, the enabling of God to forgive without the loss of government. This notion of propitiation, in every phase of it, from human sacrifice downward, fails to be an exact truth, and yet has under it a certain symbolic force and moral power. It is a beam of light refracted in the atmosphere of human passion; it is the blood-red sun that hangs on the horizon shaded, misplaced

and dyed by earthly vapors. The sacrifices, in any exact language we give them, are inadequate symbols, quite failing to interpret our true dependencies on God. They subserve their purpose best, when we accept every hint, and bind ourselves to none. As long as sin is to be intimidated, justice must be in the foreground, and a justice that, in its apprehension, suffering the distortions of human thought, will become a bloody, exacting attribute. The symbolic sacrifice will, therefore, in this direction deepen its hue, and while subserving a truly moral purpose, be capable of easy and permanent perversion. The search for any exact, formal scheme of salvation, as instituted and announced in these sacrifices, in which infliction should stand for infliction, is a fruitless moiling into the symbol, rather than a rising through it into the profound truths which it expresses and hides.

That the language of the altar is to be kept thus pliant and expansive is indicated not only as in harmony with a vigorous rendering of every method of religious instruction, but also by the variety in the Jewish ceremonial, by its intermixture, its blending together of sacrifices a portion of which allow of no vicarious rendering, and by the freedom with which the same language is applied in different cases in the relation of things as of persons to God. Thus an atonement was said to be made by the high-priest for the altar, the tabernacle, and the holy place, as well as for himself and the congregation. In the passage in the Hebrews, a portion of which is so frequently urged to enforce a strictly vicarious view, things are freely included with persons, and we are not at liberty to adopt a solution too strict for either of them. "Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood ; *and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these ; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.* This remission, this purification, must be of such a nature that it could have a direct, symbolic application to an altar as to a person, it can not, then, be strictly vicarious. The looseness of the symbol will not allow it to be formulated in this way. The imagery is less exact but far more inclusive than the interpretation. The holy things and places vaguely image the things of heaven, and Christ is at once high-priest and sacrifice. Many of the features of the symbol are only partially appropriate, and some have no significance, so easy, bold and airy is the motion of the thought. Yet the one truth is clear above all, we stand with Christ, he is our high-priest, our approach unto God is with and by him.

Nor do we any more find a historical support for a formal, vicarious atonement in the circumstances which attended the death of Christ. Nothing could be more unjudicial, out of the range and observation of positive, divine law, more in defiance of it, than the crucifixion of Christ. On what ground is a new outbreak of sin like this, a wanton cruelty in renewed oversight of the divine will, to be taken up into the tribunal of Heaven, pronounced a part of its own procedure and made the necessary condition of a formal pardon? The parties to this infliction, this punishment, if we must so regard it, under positive law are not those who have the administration of that law, but criminals under it. The sentence is that of a Roman court and the Jewish Sanhedrim. The condemnation is a new crime, not a solemn, judicial act before the firm seat of Divine Justice. An attentive spectator would have thought that perfect law, complete justice, had suf-

* Heb. ix, 21.

fered fresh overthrow. The agents in this action are a Roman soldiery and a city rabble, uniting law and lawlessness, tyranny and riotousness, in one composite act of sin. Nothing could be more foreign to the outstanding features of this transaction than the assertion, that it represents divine justice in its quiet, exact fulfillment. This subsumption of the violence, the frenzy, of human wickedness as a divine, judicial process is most strange, calls for the most explicit assertion, and clear explanation. We have always been greatly surprised that this incongruity has not been more generally felt. We see not why, on the same principle, any act of violence, directed toward a good man, might not, to the extent of its value as suffering—and all suffering should have a legal value—be taken into the divine scheme, and there be economized as an offset against the penal roll. That the transaction at the time bore no judicial character, looked to no such issue, could not be admitted as an objection, for the crucifixion of Christ was removed in its circumstances as far as any act could be from the appearance of righteousness. It is certainly an astonishing judicial manipulation by which the greatest sin is turned into the one only remedy of sin, its supreme legal infliction. In the parable of the husbandmen, illustrative of the relation of men to God and to Christ, it would seem as if the violence by which the son and heir was cast out and slain should have been the completion of a redemptive process, and not merely the provocation to final retribution. The most significant feature in the death of Christ finds no recognition in that parable. That which is sin to the perpetrators, to wit, the crucifixion of Christ, is to be to them salvation,—and was doubtless to some of them—and, under this vicarious theory, not as a sin repented of, but as a real transaction with a legal

value. How could one repent of that which to him and others was the ordinary method of salvation?

It does not suffice to say, that strict judicial features and forms are secondary ; that it is open to the divine government to dispense with them and to take into its counsels, as passive agents, any parties. We have started out on a strictly judicial claim, a formal, governmental exigency. The necessity of the atonement has been made to rest on judgments, and so judicial processes can not in the same transaction be honored and utterly set aside. If a lesson of exact justice is to be taught, it must be taught in an exact way, and be in keeping throughout. It is of the very nature of legal, judicial transactions to be judicial and legal, and in vitiating the form we vitiate the substance. The difference between Lynch-law and law may be only one of form. It is not enough that the murderer be hung, he must be hung by the officer of the law. The second item is as essential as the first. It is of the nature of law to be particular, it is of the nature of justice under a vicarious scheme to be particular, and if we invoke law and justice we too must be particular and abide by them. Removing one foot from the law, the other slips off it also. It is impossible to honor the justice of Heaven in a transaction like that of Calvary.

Not merely in the forms and agents of the events do we miss all penal features, but also in the sufferings of the victim. Those sufferings were physical and spiritual. The physical sufferings alone were a direct infliction, the spiritual sufferings were incident to a holy nature under spiritual law. No great judicial weight can be assigned the bodily sufferings of Christ by a tribunal settling infinite rewards and punishments for a countless multitude ; while his mental sufferings, his compassion, his yearning desire, his clinging love to men are really the sanctity, the hap-

piness of his holy and divine nature ; that of which he could not and would not for a moment have been divested. This compassion is not punishment, it is barely pain, it is the redemptive power of a pure soul. Spiritual suffering is, in a deeper sense, joy and life, and, in the form of tender love and yearning trust, can by no means be called an infliction. If any thing in the agony of the garden or of the cross be attributed to the anger of God, we must feel that this anger is a pure figment, a misty fiction, begotten of the doctrine, not sustaining it ; and this whether we look at the narrative or at the nature of the case. The words, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me," are a familiar outcry of a spirit wrestling with itself, being shaken at its hold of faith by an internal struggle. Vicarious anger, vicarious in its object, and vicariously felt, is an absurdity, a piece of moral mechanism, the like of which we find nowhere in human experience, and for which we discover no ground or occasion in the moral sense. We are wrenched by our own sins, we are cast down in compassion by the sins of others, we may be disturbed by the mistaken anger of another directed toward us for supposed complicity in transgression, we never feel guilty of another's sin, we are never distressed by a pure, holy eye resting on our tender sympathies, nor can such an eye otherwise than compassionate them. There is no ground for the anger of God against Christ, and we can not evoke it by a fiction. Truth is too powerful for us. The agony of the garden finds its explanation, filling it with moral force and living power, in the tender compassionateness, the eager, yearning love of Christ, forced back, baffled, and rebuffed by the contradiction of sinners. Its secret and deep fountains were those of the spiritual affections. A soul so struggling may seem to itself forsaken, but is not forsaken.

The want of a historical basis for a strictly vicarious

atonement is also seen in the absence of any facts in human history which can be brought forward for its illustration and enforcement. The principle involved has not been taken up in our historic experience. There is one stock example, that of Zalucus, the Locrian; and with this cunning, affectionate, stupid act of a remote, dark era the light of comparison expires—the torch of experience goes out. A doctrine which should receive its significance from oft-returning moral transactions catches its exposition from this uncertain rush-light shining in a dark age.

The moral power of the judicial act by which the father consented to the loss of an eye in order to redeem one of his son's eyes, who, by an act of adultery, had forfeited both, is found in its affection; its governmental force, in the sense of certainty imparted to the threatened punishment, since the ruler had spared neither himself nor his son; its sagacity, in this substitution of one thing for another, with such love and self-denial that none could carp at it; and its stupidity, in supposing, if the king did suppose, that this ingenious evasion was a legitimate, judicial transaction, that it rested on a principle which could find recognition in wise government, that a second criminal could be allowed to bring forward any two human eyes for extinction, that what the law demanded was eyes, not the eyes of adulterers.

This doctrine shows also its destitution of a historic basis by its method of growth. It is plain that the early and the patristic church had not defined the work of Christ on its legal, justiciable side. Views of his work were prevalent quite in conflict with its vicarious character, and resting on the figure of a ransom. The patristic writers must be closely searched to find any clear recognition of a vicarious sacrifice. Not till we reach the scholastic age do the ideas of justice and veracity, the exigencies of

righteousness and of a righteous government, giving occasion for a vicarious punishment, come prominently forward. From Anselm onward to the Reformation, and the full unfolding of Calvinism, these conceptions gained a more and more severe, logical statement. This doctrinal development, late and partial, almost personal—to such a degree was it the fruit of a few leading, speculative minds—has all along been attended with spirited dissent. From the Reformation to the present time, while there have been firm nuclei in the Protestant Church, holding to the vicarious theory in its rigid consistency, there has also been a growing tendency to soften the doctrine, till we now have every phase of acceptance and denial. In this development, we fail to see the traces of fundamental, historic truth. For a long and vigorous period the doctrine is not a prevalent, efficient element of faith. If present at all, it is so in so obscure a form as not to be consciously realized by those who hold it. Yet the belief, if true, must always and equally have been, as a fact, a necessity of salvation, and, as a doctrine, a fundamental point in religious instruction.

In an age peculiarly logical, mechanical, subtile in its conceptions, the theory is brought clearly forward, having hitherto hardly played so conspicuous a part as the notion of a ransom paid to the devil, and in a metaphysical, analytical way elaborated into a complete coherent scheme. Under a rigid yet inconsistent rendering of the idea of justice, the sufferings of Christ are made penal. As a conclusion plainly akin to this, the obedience of Christ becomes, to a cold and fruitless logic, a fund of merit, capable, by imputation, of distribution to the saints, even as his sufferings had stood them in stead of punishment. Such scholiums of the theory as a limited atonement and an exact transfer of merits and demerits between man and

man, action and action, made their appearance. The last, in its logical outcome as a doctrine of indulgences, issued in the grossest wickedness.

This theory, then, as the growth of a barren, logical process ; as held with shifting and conflicting statements ; as expounded in every variety of way, on every variety of principle ; as giving rise to monstrous and immoral conclusions ; as being the product of a few minds, and accompanied from the outset with more or less dissent ; as first slowly passing forward to an extreme statement, and then as steadily declining from it, shows no sufficient hold on the Christian conscience, and is not able to vindicate for itself a place among historic truths. A doctrine that starts out with an exact justice and ends in *quasi* justice, that pushes a precise claim and meets it at length with an expressional payment ; a doctrine, that following its conclusions freely, issues in gross immorality, or, proceeding more cautiously, has, at length, nothing left but equivalent expressions, judicial indications, of the divine mind ; a doctrine preëminently one of logic, yet whose threads of thought are always tangling, and spun from a half dozen independent and opposed points, claims nothing from us on its inspired or its historic side.

It also fails to root itself among permanent moral truths, because, as a moral force, it has been outstripped by sporadic development outside of Christianity. This argument is capable of large expansion ; we shall barely state it, and illustrate it by single examples. If the moral nature of man once gets beyond the vicarious idea, that nature will return to it very reluctantly even though it be enforced by Christianity. Spiritual liberty is not easily yielded, nor the sense of a free and purely spiritual footing before God. Every mind, therefore, which has gotten hold of the notion of Deity, as a spiritual power dealing spirit-

ually with men, will not, can not, readily take up again the trammels of formal processes and judicial exigencies. "Every Hellene may offer sacrifice and prayer without any stranger's mediation,"* was the best Grecian temper, while the Jews were still bound close to a ritual. Sophocles, in his *Œdipus at Colonus*, says,

"For one soul working in the strength of love
Is mightier than ten thousand to atone."†

Here is an atonement on its spiritual footing, and one which the soul can not yield.

Our second leading objection to any strictly vicarious element in the sufferings of Christ is, that its recognition is at war with the first principles of ethics, and so misleads and perverts the moral sense. It is a postulate with us that the moral constitution of man must be and is the foundation of religion, that nothing is truly religious that is not truly ethical, and that the activity of our spiritual nature is found in the free interplay of religious truths and moral perceptions. We have already seen that the great facts of religion, as the being of God, admit of no proof aside from our moral constitution, and that, once established, they derive their entire spiritual significance from that nature. Religion simply offers new facts to the ethical intuitions, judgments and affections, and, by virtue of them, these enter on a new activity, in a clearer, more enduring, and gladdening life. The centre of our moral nature is conscience, an intuitive discernment and enforcement of right, an enforcement which can proceed alone under a recognition of the power of choice. It is an axiom in ethics that responsibility is commensurate with power. An action is disclosed in its moral quality by the light

* Curtius' *His. of Greece*, vol. 2, p. 3.

† *The Tragedies of Sophocles*, by J. C. Louttrall, p. 89.

which conscience throws upon it ; and its personal bearing, as one of sin or righteousness, is determined by its coming directly or indirectly within the scope of choice. If we pass in the least from these first principles of our moral constitution in our theology, that theology becomes, to the degree of this departure, a perplexity, a tyranny and a superstition, a check and not a means to rational development. From these first axiomatic truths it follows at once that moral character is incommunicable, that guilt has no existence aside from the moral nature of the guilty person, and righteousness no home save in the loving thoughts of him who entertains it in his action. Guilt and righteousness are abstractions, not entities, the moment they are separated from that personal activity by virtue of which they exist.

But if these qualities of action are incapable of transfer, so are the penalties and rewards which are attached to them, or turn upon them. The chief element in these sanctions is the self-executing force of moral ideas, of the moral states incident to moral action, the rebuke and approval of conscience, the pain and the pleasure nestling in the soul itself, the strife and the peace, the disappointments and the fulfillments, of the daily life. All exterior sufferings and enjoyments derive their moral character, so far as they have one, from this internal state ; conditioned on this, they are moral, divorced from it, they are like a broken limb, or a purse picked up in the street, accidents of being. Nothing, therefore, is so immoral, that is, not moral, as the separation of pain and pleasure from the moral states they accompany. To shelter a man at heart wicked, to make him happy, to give him conditions of good permanently in advance of his moral state, is to strike a malicious stroke at the moral nature, since such a separation can only be accomplished by a measurable over-

throw of that nature, by a sensible reduction of its command of good and evil. This is the exact thing that sin is always striving to do, and its opposite the explicit declaration of the government which the moral nature is ever setting up in the world. If the penalties of sin could be separated from the sinner, if the rewards of righteousness could be shared by others than the righteous, if inner states could cease to be the controlling forces over external conditions, and this in the government of God, and under his scheme of salvation, the ethical confusion and overthrow of such a fact would be complete and hopeless. Indeed, the appearance of some such thing in this world, a partial separation of internal and external good incident to forces just getting under way, is the grand perplexity of God's present government, and this perplexity it is which a scheme of substitutes, in so far as it is one of substitution, reduces to a system, and carries forward as a permanent principle. That is to say, this theology exactly contravenes the work of God in the world, that clearing away of moral confusion, that separation of good from evil, that development of the affinities of good with good, of evil with evil, which engage him ; character with each lapsing year and generation asserting a larger control over happiness. It is apparently the purpose of God to make clear and undeniable the intrinsic dependence of enjoyment on righteousness. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." It is the drift of a scheme of vicarious redemption to recognize and provide for the separation between righteousness and its rewards. But this thing is impossible. The moral nature never yields its condemnation except on repentance, and repentance can not fail to soften its censure, and ultimately extract its pain. Whatever shifting of suffering there may be in government aside from the decrees of the moral nature, will be purely of a formal and non-ethical nature.

One may stumble into a trespass, but because he stumbled into it, it is not a sin ; he may have involved himself in a penalty disproportioned to his fault, such a penalty becomes to him an outlying pitfall, a mishap, which must be endured in its dangers, but which gets no purchase on the moral nature. If the government of God has penalties of this sort, to be tossed from hand to hand in substitution, they are purely police regulations with no moral rendering, no moral significance. A vicarious scheme may not allow itself to be gotten in motion without repentance, that is, without the cover and approval of the moral nature ; but so far as it is vicarious, it does this thing, it separates between character and happiness, and is open to our impeachment. If there is no such division, then there is no possible substitution. Such a scheme must look upon the relation of sin and suffering, righteousness and peace, as in a measure arbitrary, and capable of being satisfactorily reversed. A separation of this sort of the fruits of sin from sin itself, we regard as a conclusion in deepest conflict with our moral nature, and sure to lead, when logically expanded, to works of supererogation, imputed righteousness, the merits of the saints, indulgences. If one may escape the moral penalty of a sin his own, he may enjoy the moral rewards of righteous acts not his own. So far as God's government should recognize such a shifting of relations, it would become non-ethical, and indirectly at war with ethical principles.

A belief in the strictly vicarious sufferings of Christ is also in conflict with our moral constitution, because it rests on fictitious moral powers or states. The principles which are brought forward to sustain a vicarious sacrifice are various, and, as they largely exclude each other, they are so far, taken together, self-destructive. Moral statements that give prominence to different considerations, but

admit also those urged by each, confirm one another ; those theories whose constructive processes are preceded by destructive ones, being at war with each other, show that the central truth is missed by all.

A moral power on which a vicarious atonement is very generally made to rest is a sense of justice. If pure justice is to be a sufficient support for the theory, we must mean by it an absolute demand instituted by our moral nature that all transgression shall suffer a proportionate punishment, an eternal ethical claim that the sins and the penalties which pertain to them shall not be separated. If we were to understand by this sense of justice the indissoluble connection which is slowly evolved under our moral nature between virtue and happiness, vice and misery, we should quite assent to it. No such thing is intended. The well-nigh contradictory idea is meant that under positive law a certain infliction must follow a certain transgression, and that justice will not allow this penalty to be freely remitted. That is, God may ordain punishment, but the punishment ordained escapes, under a moral principle, farther control on the part of the authority that has itself established it. That there is in our moral nature any impulse demanding, without reference to results, positive infliction ; or forbidding the remitting of punishment, we simply deny. The case is evident. A strictly vicarious theory, much as it needs such a principle in setting out, can not, in the progress of its exposition, abide by it. Its central fact, that of substitution, is at war with it. In place of inseparable punishment is put a separable one ; in place of a guilty party an innocent one. Exact justice, instead of remaining an absolute, moral impulse, becomes an appetite, an indiscriminate claim for suffering ; and, indifferent to the parties who afford it as guilty or otherwise, becomes an ethical cannibalism, fed on the lives of its own

servants. This view of justice, as applied to a vicarious sacrifice, no sooner gives the grounds for a substitution, than it again destroys them. If it indeed compels punishment, it is certainly the punishment of the guilty. Neither the principle, nor the conclusions made to hinge on it, are admissible. The weakness of the principle is seen in the inability of this absolute justice to define a single penalty. The punishment which with fitness falls to each act of sin, it has no method of determining, till it introduces some farther end to be reached by the penalty. There is no direct proportion between a given sin and a given pain. They are united only by a rational purpose which the pain is to subserve. Pain and guilt are incommensurable terms. The advocate of absolute justice may even be found to escape this dilemma by the assertion, that every sin deserves infinite punishment, while the sacrifice of Christ is possessed of infinite atoning merit. Thus, by a jugglery of words, legal equivalents are swept away, and the initiatory principle of exact justice lost sight of. There is nothing but confusion in the assertion of inexorable justice ; the purely moral penalty is softened at once by repentance, the purely positive penalty may be modified by the authority that establishes it, for reasons the equivalents of those for which it was set up. Nothing can possibly hinder this ; substitution would itself be an example of it.

The word justice is primarily applicable to positive law, and expresses its fitness, and the fitness of its sanctions. Such laws afford grounds of comparison. They have a purpose, and may be judged by it, by their power to reach it, and the adaptation of their penalties to it. Each punishment stands also in a relation of greater or less with every other punishment, coördinate with it in the ends sought. But positive law in thus defining justice, in defin-

ing righteous penalties as fitting, proportionate punishments in securing righteous ends, does not make that justice absolute, but the reverse. It has force only so far as the ends of legislation impart force. The moment these relax, justice relaxes. The quality of fitness can not go beyond the conditions which sustain it.

But God's government is not primarily one of positive law, and does not, therefore, have even the rigidity which attaches to commands. The positive rules of religion are of little account save as they lead to pure morality, and bring the soul back to this standard; save as they lead ultimately to insight, and put the soul in possession of its own spiritual powers, and under their inherent authority. The ritual rule must guide upward, and the moral principle, sinking for a moment to a precept whose force is in the *ictus* of the voice that pronounces it, must rise again to its own elevation, and be left, as the soul progresses, to its inherent truth, to the energy which fell to it, not when inspiration re-uttered it, but when God accentuated it as a fundamental law in spiritual life. Positive authority thus plays a very transient, secondary part in God's government, and leaves to justice, in its primary application, a very subordinate service.

The inwrought moral government of God, that which is in us, in society, in the world; that which follows us wherever we are, and every instant strengthens its hold upon us; that which springs up in every change of our condition as yielding its controlling features; that which is in our lives, and not a condition alien to them, greatly modifies the notion of justice in modifying that of law. As the emphasis of law is no longer in him who announces it, but in the very constitution of him who receives it, so justice is not found in a fixed connection between disobedience and punishment, a connection sustained by a

lawgiver, but in the inevitable, inherent relation of sin and suffering.

This relation existing in full force as the central fact of our moral constitution, shades off into dependencies less inherent as we pass outward. Sin as sin and because it is sin calls forth the rebuke of conscience, perverts the action and embitters the life of the soul. This is not a fact of outside ordination, but of innate constitution, of that order which is the essence of creation. The rebuke is not in all cases equally loud, the bitterness equally declared, but the one and the other proceed steadily to disclose themselves, and to bring on the entail of death. Without this central fact all inflictions are merely so many discomforts. But sin as sin works its way into our intellectual, our moral, our physical natures, disturbs their harmony, inverts their laws, distorts their action, and plucks down new mischiefs at every step, punishments held in reserve by the forces dealt with, by the divine constitution of the soul, of society, of physical life.

Moreover, God's creation, by virtue of the harmony which is in part incident to its physical and spiritual interdependencies, and in part preparatory to the extension of those dependencies, immediately catches up and echoes backward and forward the sentence of moral reprobation, till the air is everywhere full of it, as of scorching heat or stinging cold, and the soul finds no escape.

These inwrought punishments admit of no substitution, but they do admit, in various degrees, more immediately or more remotely, of amelioration. The soul is purged and purified by repentance, and corrected action begins at once to soften and lift the penalty. The core of it, the feeling of guilt and shame, though the seat of acute pain in the moment of repentance, quite alters its character, loses its bitterness, becomes regenerative, and, as penalty,

is slowly eliminated by living forces. The secondary results of sin in the intellect, in social and physical activity, are slowly reached and corrected by secondary causes, or, if not removed, are measurably robbed of their virus.

We object to a vicarious atonement in its relation to our moral nature because it brings distortion and exaggeration to certain facts of that nature, as those of justice and positive law, and reduces or hides other more fundamental facts, those which pertain to the interior, intrinsic law of moral life, shame, guilt, rebuke, repentance, forgiveness, encouragement. One of these, forgiveness, calls for the clearest recognition. Forgiveness is a fact, a most renovating, hopeful fact of our spiritual constitution. Forgiveness puts us on a new footing with others, as penitence does with ourselves; and the two gradually cancel sin, annul the past and redeem the future. Forgiveness can be indefinitely extended on purely moral grounds to those who sincerely seek it, while it and repentance plant new seeds of life. These are great facts of the moral nature, and any vicarious theory that obscures them, does an irreparable mischief. A clear, bold, reiterated affirmation of the spiritual laws of our life is what we need, as a means of planting ourselves upon them; while a strict, vicarious sacrifice stands in no harmony with them. It distorts justice, is false to the inherent, redemptive force of our spiritual life, to the renewing power of repentance, to the cleansing love of forgiveness. Penalty has no such hold on the guilty soul as to call for an *ab extra* method of shaking it off.

Failing to find this inexorable urgency of a legal claim in our moral nature as the grounds of penal punishment in Christ, some seek it in an exigency of veracity, occasioned by a direct assertion of God. It was needful, it is said, that God should do all that he could do to deter men

from sin. He did deter them by an explicit threat of punishment. This punishment he can not now, therefore, remit. On this supposition his method of evasion by transfer remains open, as a moral transaction, to the criticism already urged. But it suffices to deny the facts which give rise to the alleged exigency. There are no such positive declarations, such peremptory threats, embarrassing the ordinary spiritual administration of God's kingdom. To give such an extension to the words of Scripture is quite unwarrantable. Most grave are the objections to these devices, these feebly sustained facts, which are assigned a potency sufficient to arrest the flow of moral law. God's government is thus made to entrap itself, to bring up in a corner; and is compelled to do, even to the crucifixion of Christ, what free moral forces do not require to be done. Let us reject these fictions, and get back again to sufficient and eternal principles, before we lose the power to discern them.

If the defenders of a vicarious sacrifice pass the inherent claims of justice, and rest their cause on the exigencies of government, the looser connections incident to moral influence, they still pervert or miss the facts of our moral constitution, and so weaken its foundations. Urging no farther the radical objection, that no government, otherwise than by evasion and subterfuge, can admit the principle of vicarious punishment, finding as it does, no support in pure morality or in penal administration, there remain such discrepancies between the ends and the resources of human government and the divine government, that we should reason with caution from one to the other. Punishment may be administered with larger forgiveness, more flexibility, and purely personal adaptations by God than by man, because, in the divine government, the objects of punishment may be more purely moral, more extended in time,

less pressed by an exigency, and pursued with infinitely more insight and resources. The omniscience of God, protecting him from misapplied forgiveness, and abused kindness, his omnipotence, protecting him both from the fact and the appearance of weakness in his government, or the possibility of evasion, allow him to put each case on its own merits as man can not. Moreover, the instantaneousness of the protection which civil governments seek, the short periods at their disposal, and their limited means of restraint, compel them to crowd events, hurry punishments, and insist on inflictions in a way quite alien to the divine method. To closely liken the two governments is to overlook the free, broad, inwrought, irresistible moral conditions which fall to the one, and the hasty, semi-physical ends, and the feeble, superficial means, which belong to the other.

Human governments can not, because of their weakness, forgive on simple repentance. They have not sufficient insight to determine the nature of repentance, nor can they spare the restraints of fear, nor endure the suspicion which may attach to their own strength. The criminal, on the other hand, is not dangerous to the government of God, nor God's strength doubtful, nor is he uncertain as to the grounds of procedure, nor is he crowded and coerced by police exigencies. His power rests securely on natural forces, which can not but press quietly forward to a complete fulfillment.

A vicarious sacrifice can secure no justification save in a divine attribute, like justice, or in a governmental exigency, like that which forbids a ruler to retreat from a position once taken. Neither of these pleas belong to it, and it can not, therefore, subserve a purpose by way of a general expression of the mind of God, making an impression equivalent to the punishment of the guilty. That God

forgives the guilty on repentance, that repentance is regenerative in its nature, are the very truths that need to be made known. God's government can abide by its facts, and does not require the disguise of an expression. The criminality of sin is not found in its external punishment, in the penalty affixed, but in its nature; and this guilty nature is best seen in its antagonism to love, and is best cleansed away by forgiveness. To refuse to forgive sin is not to hate sin as sin, but is to be willing to maintain it, to hold it and the sinner in eternal antagonism. This is what the wicked do with their enemies, not what the righteous do with offenders. When God's government rests on pure moral facts, it best discloses its moral qualities and is the highest expression of truth. The good man yearns to forgive, and will not be refused forgiveness save on moral grounds. Unless the grounds which forbid forgiveness to God are of this nature, they can not be made to rest on general influence, since general influence, to be wholesome, must repose on sound, moral impulses. There is no *quasi* morality with God, acts in themselves inadmissible, but possessed of an expressive, expository character. God's estimate of sin would be very badly put by an act unjustifiable in principle. Two things must be made out preliminary to a vicarious penalty, first, the necessity of the execution of the penalty; second, the admissibility of substitution. Neither is shown. God's government admits forgiveness freely. It is the very triumph of a spiritual nature to forgive. Penal substitution is never admissible. It violates personality and pure morality, and so violates them as to break down their very character. The soul must bear its own guilt and can not bear another's. This method also disregards the very exigency or urgency of the government in behalf of which it is set up, and dismisses the criminal on repentance, when we have been told that

he can not be thus let off. It thus opens as wide the door of escape as does forgiveness itself, and destroys any plea that has been set up in governmental safety or necessity. Hence all the practical result left to such a vicarious punishment is some vague notion of impression, of *quasi* justice, of general effect; an influence, which, having no support in exact principles, is an illusion, and more and more disclosed as such by the progress of thought. This continual substitution of more general and vague language for more precise claims indicates that the mind is, in its explanations, eluding the insight of the moral sense and being driven from point to point.

In this theology is contained a vital attack on our ethical constitution. A penalty exterior and positive in its character, something added to, and alien to, strictly moral sanctions is insisted on as the essential thing in God's government. That is to say, a pure moral government is not self-sufficing, but comes to nothing unless helped out, propped up, supplemented, by positive authority. This is as if one should say, Society owes its moral constitution to civil law, not civil law to its moral constitution. Yet positive enactment in God's government is secondary, transient, leading the soul back to pure, spiritual law. This vicarious scheme allows God and man to be so embarrassed by the entanglements of positive law, as to be constrained to admit a penalty not only alien to the claims of pure morality, but so at war with them as to strike at the very life of the soul. If the sinner is punished, he spiritually perishes; if he is not punished, he can be saved. Salvation has not only slipped its moral basis, but is ready to be sacrificed to positive law. From this dilemma of its own making, government finds an escape by the immoral evasion of substitution. Can the cunning and stupidity of methods go farther?

This declaring the moral nature insufficient in itself, its penalties slight, and its rule a hopeless miscarriage, is a great, though a subtle, immorality. The attention is turned from the deep-seated government of God in the soul itself, and is directed to an external, scarcely moral, mechanism of rewards and punishment, calling for the entire skill and strength of heaven, even to the sacrifice of its Ruler, to run it. Forgiveness, a profound spiritual element, is not granted its appropriate power. If, in some sense God forgives, yet his forgiveness has no sweep, no range, no overruling power, amid the stern laws that uphold his throne. It can work no restitution, it must wait on a judicial process. This is to make life subordinate to mechanism, the thing done to the method of doing it.

We close this second leading point, that a strictly vicarious atonement is at war with moral principles, with one more consideration; its principal emphasis is laid on the escape from the penalty of sin, not on the escape from sin itself. If we were to concede the sacrifice of Christ to be vicarious, this element in it would still remain a very secondary one. The position it now receives is that which belongs to the mind of a criminal. He is chiefly interested in his enlargement. He takes admonition with a little impatience, and returns at once to the pardon, to the hour in which the bolts shall be drawn. The real exigency of his case lies in his bad temper, a heart open to crime. What agencies shall touch and regenerate this, shall cleanse this leprosy, and restore the flesh of childhood! This work well done, and doors are easily opened; without this cleansing, it were well that they should remain closed. The view of the atonement under discussion devotes its subtilty and sharp reasoning to picking the locks of justice, and has but a remnant of zeal left for its

appropriate work, the heart's regeneration under natural, spiritual forces. Or this work may be passed over entirely to a strictly supernatural agency, and morality, spiritual morality, the angel that waits at the right hand of God, stands by discarded, having nothing to do with the escape and restoration. Not till we turn our back on penalties, seeking the thing before us, the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus, will they slip from us, like Christian's burden, finding its way into an open sepulchre, among things dead. Eager to evade punishment, we shall lose life; pursuing life, we shall escape punishment, hardly knowing when or how. The fear of infliction is an immoral, or at best a preliminary, feeling, and can never be made the central feature of salvation. A settled wish to escape the legitimate results of conduct, and secure position aside from action, places instead of states, is the one blind, criminal impulse of the soul.

It may be thought, these accusations are much too sweeping for the facts; the doctrines attacked have been highly moral in their effects, and can, therefore, hardly have immoral bearings. The answer is triple. First, there are united with this vicarious principle, truths furnishing the strongest incentives to the spiritual life, and hence the results of this one element are hidden. Second, the moral conflicts, inconsistencies, involved in the doctrine itself, are by no means clearly traced out by those who hold it, and hence but a portion of the mischief logically due to it is actually suffered. Most confine the principle to one transaction, and so hem in the contagion of a false premise; they miss its real relations, and give their doctrine throughout a fictitious character. Third, there have been abundant bad results traceable to this doctrine. In the Catholic faith this principle has, at times, been systematically applied to the subversion of morality. Luther,

in turn, while sedulously restricting the fact of substitution to the sufferings of Christ, made available by faith, cast the most direct contempt on pure morals. "A Christian can not, if he will, lose his salvation by any multitude or magnitude of sins, unless he ceases to believe. For no sins can damn him but unbelief alone. Everything else, provided his faith returns or stands fast in the Divine promise given in baptism, is absorbed in a moment by that faith." This assertion and similar ones led Martineau to say, "Luther, whose unscrupulous audacity never tires of forging phrases of opposite stamp by which he may put the brand of insult upon Morals, and burn characters of glory into the brow of Religion."* This antagonism, so utterly mistaken, between Morals and Religion, grew up, in the mind of Luther, with the doctrine of a vicarious relation in Christ. Constantly in Protestantism, a semi-theoretical hostility of the same kind, and the possibility of a practical divorce between faith and virtue, have been painfully observable. There has been occasion for the reproach of Morley. "There is no counting with certainty on the justice of men who are capable of fashioning and worshiping an unjust Divinity; nor on their humanity, so long as they incorporate inhuman motives in their most sacred dogma; nor in their reasonableness, while they rigorously decline to accept reason as a test of truth."†

It thus becomes, with the coherence of cause and effect, a true assertion by Martineau, that "the tendency of a wholly *super*-natural religion is to produce an *infra*-natural morality."‡

In the doctrine of the atonement, as often held, there has been especially stored up the unyielding temper, the shallow subterfuge, the irrational and immoral issue. The

* Studies of Christianity, p. 335.

† Rousseau, vol. I, p. 228.

‡ Ibid, p. 336.

defenders of this doctrine, while missing this defect in their own tenets, have seen it in those of their co-laborers. The expressionalist discerns the logical and moral vice in the too rigorous premises of the precisionist, and the precisionist perceives that there must be connections of thought kindred to his own in the dogma of the expressionalist, or it becomes wholly vague and unfounded.

Not only is a historic and moral basis wanting to vicarious punishment, it has no sufficient religious support. It perverts religious facts, and hides their spiritual force. It distorts the character of God. If the unity of God were closely held, this doctrine could not easily find place. It would present the Deity as a flagellant, inflicting stripes on himself either for the ends of justice, or government, or expression. It is preposterous that any ends, either of control or instruction or pure principle, should be met by such a spectacle. It would show a radical unreason in the constitution of things, that gratuitous pain should subserve these highest purposes. The drama, however, is greatly helped by assigning different parts to different persons in the Godhead. One can stand as Justice, another come forward as Grace; and the conflict is overlooked. But there is none the less a rending of the divine unity. If God the Father can not forgive, neither can God the Son. If pure principle and worthy ends forbid it in the one case, they do in the other also. Nothing can relieve the one of any pressure, whether of justice, or of government, or of grace, which the other feels. There is no opportunity for divided counsel or action on real, inherent principles. We must make the supposition of a purely formal hitch in government, to be gotten over by a trick of administration, before we can assign parts, and recognize divided action. There can be no division of sentiment in sincere inflictions, and hence God conciliates himself by his own

punishment, cancels his own law by accepting its penalties, restores his government, involved in a serious miscarriage, by virtue of his omnipotence, carrying away the punishments which otherwise could have swept all his subjects into hell, and brought his kingdom to an end; or rather left the smouldering embers of it an offence forever. Are there not here a feebleness of device, an awkwardness of execution that put the government of God beyond all parallel in the perplexity of its details, and in its tragic issues.

This view is unfaithful to religious facts, because it disturbs the real vicarious relations sustained to us by Christ, sets the crucifixion by itself, and cuts it off from all likeness to the sympathetic spiritual dependencies by which we are united one to another. That we suffer for each other; that we are closely interlocked through the entire range of our physical, social, spiritual powers; that we enter into the joys and griefs, the triumphs and defeats, of our fellows; that the individual life and the common life are inseparable, can neither of them move forward in a distinct development, are facts never to be lost sight of, and they involve at every stage a general, vicarious element. That a like relation measurably exists between us and God, that he puts himself under the conditions of sympathy, patience and love, which our circumstances call for, are also facts of supreme moment in the obedience, courage, devotion they call forth. The pure spiritual character and homogeneity of the dependencies between man and man, between men and God, constitute their life-giving moral element, define our duties, and teach us what we may look for from all high and holy natures. God works for us as we work for one another, and so, in turn, work for him. One common feeling pervades and apporions all effort. We make up what is behindhand in the sufferings of Christ. Put this vigorous moral principle, in

the case of Christ, under the limitation of a strictly vicarious sacrifice, and he is out of relation in his work with us. We can not share his chief labor, and that labor proceeds on another and more urgent principle than ours. A rigid law has found entrance, a justice that measures out penalties and will not abate claims, that buys and sells its infictions, and keeps accounts. The free, living, variable moral interdependence that counts nothing exactly, that looks for much, that appeals boldly to generosity and love and spiritual service, disappears. We are put on distinct terms of favor, on a legal footing, with Christ; not so much as those who have been bought, as those who have been bought up, with a price. The relation in itself most blessed in which we are included with Christ, we can not, so interpreted, sympathetically enter into, nor ourselves sympathetically extend to others. The work of Christ stands as a spiritual anomaly, lacking the constitutional, normal hold on the heart of man which falls to spiritual love, accepting and fulfilling everywhere the conditions of fellowship. This impression is increased precisely in the degree in which we make the work of Christ, the work of God, to be done to God and for God. We are not drawn by it into a soul-stirring salvation of love, but are first saved, on grounds difficult of apprehension, and then urged to be grateful for a salvation so achieved. We are, at best saved by an act of love, and not in love. Indeed, the only way in which the work of Christ, so interpreted, can retain its divine power for us, is by our shutting our eyes to the alleged moral mechanism, and getting back to the love involved in a sacrifice, in some inscrutable way necessary; that is, our salvation is found in excluding this theoretical presentation, and attending to the remnant of moral power present under it. The more closely we bring the work of Christ to a basis of ordinary spiritual fellow-

ship, the more regeneratively it acts on our hearts as a living, familiar, imitable impulse.

Here enters that wresting of the Scriptures which carries them over from a free and moral, to a definite and dogmatic, utterance. There is no truth more central to social, spiritual development than this of our vicarious relation to each other. That the work of Christ, the brightest illustration of it, should find frequent exposition under it, an exposition always earnest, and dropping at times into language made cogent by the figurative energy of the altar, was natural and inevitable. This extreme, this hyperbolic, pressure is held in check, as a logical statement, by other figures conjointly preserving the one truth, while conjointly effacing each particular impression of it in its precise features. Exceedingly various is the imagery under which Christ and the work of Christ are presented. He is the Captain of our salvation, the destroyer of the devil; our High-Priest; the bread that came down from Heaven, the door of the fold, the foundation on which we are built, the uplifted symbol, like the serpent in the wilderness; he is a ransom, a curse for us; his blood is the seal of a new testament; that whereby we are purchased, are redeemed; that wherewith we are cleansed or sanctified; his is the blood of propitiation and reconciliation.* If any one of these images is laid hold of as an exact, complete statement, the remainder become conflicting and misleading, but if they are allowed, one and all, under the general vicarious law of the moral world, to express different bearings of the work of Christ, then they each find place, and are held firmly together under the leading assertion,

* Compare Math. xx, 28; xxvi, 28. Jno. iii, 14, 15; vi, 51; x, 9. Acts xx, 28. Rom. iii, 25. I Cor, iii, 11. II Cor. v, 19. Eph. ii, 20. Gal. iii, 13. Heb. ii chap; ix, 12; xiii, 12. I Pe. i, 18, 19. Heb. xiii, 12.

"I deliver unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."* A general truth admits of a variety of illustration, a precise judicial formula can not be departed from in language; it is a single statement, a minute object, to be kept carefully in the focus of the instrument, or we lose it altogether.

What we asserted in morals is equally true of our estimate of the religious facts of the atonement. If the work of Christ is pushed forward as a judicial act, its true spiritual power is to a degree hidden; the truth, the nearness, the fellowship are concealed by this fearful, obtruding, legal sanction. Such weighty outside issues are settled by it, are so its prime purpose, that its interior, spiritual power is quite incidental to their adjustment. We see God-through his justice. The image of his character is gathered and defined by the lens of law. We love Christ because of the sacrifice he has made for us; we are saved by the new, external conditions conceded to us. So God, in the light of his own loving attributes, is again lost; Christ, in the simplicity of his speech, the directness of his work, the immediateness of his fellowship, is obscured; and the illumination, which is to be wrought in our lives as the new efficient force of the incarnation, is smothered down. The kingdom of God becomes meat and drink, a shifting of liabilities, and not righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; and this to the exact degree in which we thrust our dogma forward.

But the strictly vicarious element can not be admitted without its forcing itself into the foreground. A judicial claim is of so positive and peremptory a nature, is such a bar to purely moral considerations, lends such a deaf ear to reason and mercy, rides down, in so unfaltering a way,

* 1 Cor. xv, 3.

all opponents that it draws the first, the most immediate, attention. Arraigned under a legal process, standing before a judge, everything becomes impertinent that is not legal, and the feeblest tip-staff has precedence of Grace and Wisdom. So it is in the incarnation. Christ the holy and divine teacher, the ensample, the companion and guide, can find no sufficient place beside the *quasi* criminal, the substitute, the stupendous sacrifice, who is to set right Heaven's laws ; to gather in his bosom, and quench in his blood, the thunderbolts of Justice through all time ; to open the gates of the Upper Kingdom, otherwise hopelessly closed against us. His words, his spirit, his love are incidental to this Herculean labor, and the blood of his sacrifice is a symbol to us, not of cleansing and fellowship, but the stain upon the lintel which warns off the avenging angel. The life of Christ thus sinks into the shadow of his death, and his death is no longer the simple, natural completion of his life, giving the fullest emphasis to its lessons of love and sacrifice, but that for which he came, that for which Earth and Heaven united in making ready. When, for a moment, we sit at the feet of Christ for instruction, the feverish atmosphere of the great event is still with us, preventing quiet, deep insight, and imparting a strained and straitened temper to all that is said. As the work of Christ is thus taken up, and to such a degree exhausted, by the urgency of an importunate, legal claim, we catch the same spirit in achieving under it our salvation. To escape the penalty of the law becomes a leading consideration, to effect an entrance into Heaven a first aim ; while the true and only spiritual work that falls to us, of achieving a salvation in our own hearts and in the world about us by a peaceful and pure possession of the truth, and a vigorous and grateful participation in the moral and religious life here open to us is, at least in

part, overlooked. Why should it not be? If legal terms are primary in the work of Christ, may they not rightly be in the salvation wrought by him? We can not well give less emphasis to judicial, formal facts than he gave, nor more to spiritual forces and interior life. If, in his scheme of salvation, those are foremost, so must they be in our salvation under it. Thus we are saved and so made holy, not made holy and so saved. The regenerative power of divine truth and love is hidden behind a vicarious infliction, is inoperative till this gives the permissive signal; the possession of a pure heart suffers the reduction that salvation comes not by it or through it, but turns on an agency quite alien to it. We are not taught first to escape sin and so its fruits; but first to evade penalties, and later look for cleansing. It is hardly too much to say, that, without a careful watchfulness against the inherent tendency of this dogma, cowardice and meanness will easily attend on the spirit with which we shelter our guilty, lazy selves, half in love with sin, under the sufferings of Christ; that harshness and cruelty will easily accompany the feeling with which we reject those who reject our panacea. Why not? A salvation achieved by an act of acceptance is too easy, too plain, to call for patience toward those who stumble at its performance; and, moreover, its efficacy must be firmly sustained in the mind. Will any one venture to say what limits this and kindred feelings have found in the average church-member? A real salvation, one achieved in the heart by divine patience and love, against blindness, willfulness and indolence, can not but leave the heart tender, patient and compassionate. The truth is, earnest Christians must push, and do practically push, into the back-ground this vicarious operation of grace, and call to the front redemptive love and obedience. They relieve themselves in action of what they may still

hold in theory. How could we put a greater conflict, greater contradiction, between the words of Christ and his work, than to make salvation in this turn on an act wholly alien to us, while in his speech it is ever springing up afresh in our affections?

The benumbing power of this dogma is also seen in its effect on exegesis. Scripture truths become cold, barren, straitened under it. "Wherefore the law was our school-master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."* "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."† "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."‡ "To declare I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."§ How do these and kindred passages drop their spiritual burden, evaporate their nutritious substance, and narrow down into a tough, fibrous fact under a strict vicarious rendering? A single achieved result is substituted for a living, on-going, organic process, and the soul falls off from the bosom of love where it was hourly nourished and its salvation hourly enlarged.

The notion of the divine law is also perverted by a vicarious penalty. In place of a searching, unfolding, moral constitution, in man, in society, in the world, one quickened by special precepts scattered historically along the development of the church, we are, by supposition, put in possession of a complete code, in chapter and section, with marginal rendering, and with penalties

* Gal. iii, 24.

† 1 Jno. i, 7.

‡ Phil. iii, 9.

§ Ro. iii, 26.

affixed ; a law, unchangeable, universal and formally announced. This seems to us a pure fiction, begotten reflexly by the facts it is intended to explain. We commend the inquiry, Where is that positive law under which a vicarious punishment takes place?

We must, then, attribute the prevalence of this dogma to a deep, underlying, moral truth, capable of partial expression on this judicial side ; to that tendency of the human mind which leads it to delight in the narrow, logical, mechanical, as opposed to the large and spiritual ; and to the historical force which this tendency gathered in the long journey of the church through the scholastic era.

We turn now to the positive purposes subserved by the incarnation. It is not within our power to state them fully, we shall make no such attempt. All the spiritual impulses that have followed and shall follow from this event are included in its object. We trace a few, for us brightest, beams of divergent light, and leave the heavens aglow with them.

The incarnation was a new, a more personal and living disclosure of God. It is the triumph of our spiritual nature, the strength of its grasp, to find God easily everywhere, to come in constant and pleasurable contact with him. But how long is the path, and how many the needful helps, for the race of man, to this consummation? To us, the crowning event in this direction, the most sufficient aid are the life and words of Christ. The clouds clear at this point, and uncover the heavens above us. We have seen out ; we have seen into the spiritual universe. Like the touch of the gardener, that guides the first tendrils of the vine, blindly searching for their support, is this bending of God to us in Christ, till we attach ourselves to him, grow by him, till he is every moment with us, and his

strength under us. The universe is the physical frame over which we spread our lives, by which we are lifted into the light, yet what definite quickening by this and that truth, by this and that divine approach to us, do we require, before we begin freely to unfold under, and rejoice in, the love of Heaven. Our nearest point of contact, our most sensible point of contact, one whose heat reaches even to our lower nature, is this in Christ; and he becomes the anointed one, the express image of that supreme power that lies back of him.

Again, the coming of Christ is all in all to us because, coming forth from God, he came with hands full of gifts for our spiritual renovation. Words, affections, actions, an incarnate life, a spirit true to its own law, these are his gifts, and he thus becomes to us an instructor, friend and guide. We feel with Philip, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." We have found him who proffers the fellowship for which every earnest soul is yearning; we have found him who came from Heaven, who is in Heaven, who can lead us to Heaven. "I am the way, the truth and the life." On his lips instruction ceases to be counsel, it is guidance, love, impulse. The only efficient command, hitherto novel to the race, is given by him, "Follow me." A path of light into the light needs no justification to those who see it.

A third purpose of the incarnation was a more clear and searching definition of the law of spiritual life, that of sacrifice, that of bending the neck unreservedly to the burdens resting on the race. This part of the work of Christ culminates in the cross, and hence the cross becomes the symbol of his method and his kingdom. We take each his cross and follow after him, this is the law of our life; we stand at the foot of his cross and are sprinkled with his blood of sacrifice, this is our consecration, our sanctifica-

tion. We are crucified unto the world and the world unto us, as a realm alien to this spirit. We are set to vanquish it, to subject it to love ; and this none can do who have not the spirit of Christ in its purity of devotion and power of patience. There is here an opportunity for misapprehension. The method of Christ may be mistaken as harsh, ascetic, out of fellowship with nature. Not so. It is not wealth as wealth, but wealth as the embodied representation of the selfish, unspiritual greed of those who accumulate it, that is assailed. The lessons of life, as most are learning them, are filled with fundamental mistakes, with a secret, pervasively mischievous spirit, with a chronic error of heart. All must be begun afresh. It will not answer to measure the new by the old, the old can not contain it. Better that we should know nothing, than insist obstinately on what we seem to know. We are not to carry our worldcraft with us into a kingdom of love. We must remake the habits of the soul, we must recast the hand-writing in which we are tracing our thoughts, commence with first principles, and allow a new organizing force to rearrange all its elements. "Go, sell all that thou hast and come and follow me." This may often be to the rigidly and complacently formed character, the essential condition of a thoroughly renovated life. The soul of man renewed, wealth will be renewed in its spirit and uses. This regenerative law of sacrifice, this life of love, is enthroned in the cross, and there demands our loyalty. The life and the death of Christ disclose the deep-seated moral conflict that is in the world. The selfish overflow of the human heart, by which its best affections are greatly restricted, or altogether smothered, is easily forgotten. The surface of society takes a gloss of conventionalities ; one measure of sympathy, of carefulness, seems possible, another impossible ; our charities, good-will and love cut out for themselves

narrow beds, and flow on in slender rills, with no power to relieve the barrenness beyond their feeble water-courses. Rigorous seasons and sterile soil prevail, but we are ready to feel that the heavens war against us, that duty is sufferance, the making the best of a little. Christ would put everything on another, a spiritual, footing. He would make every heart the centre of a new, a regenerative, power. He would commit us freely and unreservedly to the salvation of the world. He would break down its barriers, pour abroad its streams, and let their waters discharge themselves freely on its barren places. This new and holier temper discloses at once the cold spiritual conditions with which it comes in contact, the want of a deep, pervasive love, the inability of the languid moral impulses, the feeble affections, to find their own and feed upon it ; their bondage under restricted, grasping desires. This conflict, in the time of Christ, ran hastily on to the crucifixion, and it became apparent, then as now, that a conventional life, no matter what its precise phase, repels the purely spiritual, the divinely rational, locks itself up under limited conditions, and becomes the barrier, the stubborn barrier, to the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus duty, responsibility, guilt are restored clearly to the human heart ; it is primarily at fault ; it is found struggling to eliminate or to restrain the pure spiritual powers, as they force a slow growth against the customs and organic bonds of the selfish social and individual spirit. The cross of Christ reveals most distinctly this conflict, signalizes the temper with which the war is to be waged, the devotion of its servants, the nature of its victories, and the slow, sublime issues to which they are ripening.

The real vicarious element in the moral world is also clearly brought out by the cross of Christ, an element, a relation, far more pervasive than could be indicated by any

single penal infliction. Vicarious sufferings, and vicarious joys are everywhere, as broad and inevitable as the bonds of the sympathetic, spiritual life we lead one with another. Justice, as a precise adjustment of circumstances to deserts, is quite secondary. It would seem that our common conditions, our interwoven liabilities, hopes, dangers, were designed to thrust aside that justice by which each thinks to stand on his own, defend his own, grow by his own. We are touched by everybody ; helped, hindered by everybody. Heaven itself can not draw up into its own wealth, but must needs give its best to the Earth. Its moral constitution would be damaged if it did not. The breath of our spiritual life is this pervasive moral atmosphere which all lives are breathing with us, whose conditions are conditions of health or disease to us and them alike, into whose mobile depths the most corrupt soul is casting its effluvia. Every instant, every act, of our moral lives is vicarious, and the sublimest expression of this supreme principle is the cross of Christ. Its true sacrificial force belittles, hides out of sight, the formal value attributed to it. It is not the penalties of sins committed that it wipes out once for all, but it exists in momentary, everlasting struggle with every selfish, sinful impulse in us ; it sets up its claim of love, vicarious, sacrificial love, over every possession, every power, in the moral world.

We sometimes see a soft, beautiful, changeable image cast by a card, hung to the light with a few incisions, a part here and there turned outward. In the shifting sunbeams, it holds an intangible, variable, spiritual outline of lights and shades, suggesting some reality of finest mould. Take the card from the window, study its slits and its slight inflections, and it is barren outline. Such is the vicarious work of Christ, if we take it out of the light of God's love, and make a bald penal fact of it, tracing only

the lines of justice cut sharply into it. God forgive us that we can not look at truths and leave truths as he puts them, and where he puts them.

It does not fall to the life of Christ to bring out one truth, to enforce one principle, but all truths gather in at this centre of light, as the beauties of a sunset scatter themselves prodigally through the vault of heaven. Intervention, a pervasive divine presence, the open ear of Heaven, its sustaining hand, its spiritual aid, immortality, are all here.

Hence the work of Christ, as a constructive agency, passes easily into that of the Holy Spirit. At all points, and at no point more clearly than in the work of the Holy Spirit, does the fundamental difference between a moral and a judicial view of the atonement, a spiritual and a legal definition of our relation to God, appear. We are content that this presentation of the atonement should be called the moral theory, if only the word moral is allowed its proper breadth, if it is made to include the roots of righteousness, and the conditions of the growth of righteousness, in our intellectual and emotional constitution. Holiness is wholeness, and wholeness is of necessity defined by primitive, type endowments. Wholeness is the perfect type, the work hinted at finished, and this is holiness. Those who look at religion as something essentially supernatural, and so abnormal to the soul, can not identify it with a development of our entire nature, pervaded by ethical forces, a development brought about by new divine facts. To do this would be to restore religion to the soul, to confound it with healthy, complete growth under the highest conditions.

We assent to the fact, that the religionist, who makes every spiritual movement hinge directly on the will of God, not on his will as already expressed in the constitution of

the world, and going on to unfold itself by methods therein contained, but on his will in each act of regeneration springing up afresh—can not fail to attack a moral system as wholly subversive of religion. We have, on the other side, done hardly less than this in affirming that religion of this type is hostile to morality, ignoring its true offices, pushing it aside with alien powers, and submitting to a method quite adverse to it.

Very different are the fundamental conceptions of the religionist and the moralist, these words being carefully shaped to our present use of them. The religionist can devoutly say, We must have a better righteousness than our own ; the moralist must say, In no proper sense can we have any other righteousness than our own. The religionist will humbly say, Our own righteousness is but filthy rags ; the moralist, accepting the humility of the phrase, will still assert, We can never walk cleansed and clothed, never walk in white, till we are made clean by interior cleansing, and this cleanness is our pure garment. Between the two there will be much misapprehension ; the religionist will feel that the very letter of Scripture is with him, and the moralist that its entire spirit is on his side. Taking part, we must say, The deep truth, it seems to us, is with the moralist—our moralist—and his is the just apprehension of holiness.

Equally alien, on the one side and the other, are the conceptions of sin and punishment. The religionist tremblingly says, We should now be, and hitherto would have been, in hell, if justice had been done us, if grace had withheld its hand. If we understand this language clearly, if we express by it a truth and not a feeling, if hell stands for a place of torments, of insufferable, external inflictions by fire or otherwise, then to the moralist the assertion is abhorrent. What God does, is the thing to

be done ; and not to do it, to put the sinner on a first offence into hell, would be repugnant to every ethical affection, an act as inadmissible, to say the least, in God as it would be in an earthly parent. Not a single moral impulse would be met by it, and many would be outraged. No ends of government, persuasion, or love would be subserved. Cruelty is cruelty, no matter who perpetrates it, and must always move the moral world into antagonism, an antagonism the more unflinching because of the greatness of the power that inflicts it ; since power makes cruelty at once unnecessary, malignant and dangerous. It is not creditable to our understandings and hearts, that we should any longer be puzzled by riddles of language like these, that we should not be able to separate the feeling from the abstract truth, be able with the religionist to save the former without, like him, utterly destroying the latter.

But it will be said, herein lies a difference between the two schemes, the one magnifies the offence of sin, the other palliates it ; it is the settled repulsion of the religionist, he proceeds to exterminate it, the moralist toys with it, manipulates it, hoping in the end to correct it, and make something of it. This difference does not exist as it is thought to exist. The religionist defines sin, gives character to it, from the outside, the moralist from the inside. With the former sin is so little bad that its badness is liable to be overlooked without a penalty, that the sinner must be cast into hell as a means of showing that he is in a dangerous way. Thus sin becomes an evil not so much by what it is, as by what God puts upon it. Its misfortune lies in the will of God toward it, quite as much as in its own nature. The moralist, the Christian moralist, says rather, that sin is what it is primarily by its own nature, that it mars constitutional, primitive law ; violates, entangles, subverts it.

Its own inevitable fruits at once disclose and constitute, constitute and disclose, its character. It is sin because it subverts, and so far as it subverts, thwarts and destroys. Let sin alone, and it will always, under a wise, constitutional law define itself, condemn itself, punish itself. It may gather other punishments, but these will be incident to this, its first punishment. If God keeps in harmony and strength the working forces of his creation, sin will become penalty, penalty correction, correction instruction, till either sin is arrested, or, refusing arrest, lies crushed under its own accumulated evil. It is a stronger emphasis of condemnation which God puts upon sin in the nature of the soul, of society, of the universe, than can be put upon it by allowing it intrinsically to be one thing, and by positive appointment quite another. This is to put declaration at war with declaration, the secondary with the primary utterance of God, and to fill the sinful soul, not with its own ways, but with the tempestuous wrath of heaven. Evil can only beget evil, anger anger, above and below. God has defined sin, put his seal upon it, given the limits of its destructive quality. By this organic law, declaration, of heaven we may as well abide. Sin can not be made greater than the mischief it works, and this mischief is great enough, if understood, to magnify it far beyond our thoughts.

Take the soul that sin has wrought in freely sixty years, and its state is a much clearer and a scarcely less terrible fact than a sinner in hell. The one we would be glad to help out, and he perchance could be helped out, and would at least be willing to be helped out; the other we neither could help out, nor will he lay hold of our extended hand. What is the external to the internal, a sword-stroke to the leprosy, a scourge to putrefaction! If urged with the stringency of Scriptural language, which seems to put the

offence of sin in the anger of God, we answer, This is inevitable, natural ; and we are not wise to be misled by it. The concrete and personal have the precedence of the abstract and general. Yet the underlying truth of God's indignation is his and our moral nature, is the nature of sin. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." We may look, if we will, upon this language as an eager claim on the part of God of the sweet morsel of infliction for himself, or we may look upon it as a rescuing, a wresting, of vengeance from the hand of man, and a calm resumption of punishment into the depths of his own moral insight, and patient, far-reaching, corrective laws. If the mind vacillates a little between the two impressions, it may be checked in its headlong anger by the first, and be made ready to pass over, the revelation of God growing brighter, to the second. Language is not exact truth, it is the ways on which the soul is launched forward in its search after truth.

There are a few cardinal convictions we are compelled to cling to, or the universe, religion, God, are all lost in a bewildering maze. They are these, sin is sin by virtue of a choice, in view of truths measurably disclosed ; it is mingled largely with ignorance, yet with an ignorance that has in it the grit of a selfish purpose, and will not be dissolved away by simply perennial waters of truth ; that the world tarries and grows under discipline, consecutive, evolving discipline, and this is why it tarries. God works, and we work, under conditions which his reason has defined, which our reason in a measure—in the measure of our knowledge—confirms, and from which neither he nor we may depart. God's spiritually persuasive work, which pervades this discipline and constitutes its moral power, is that of the Holy Spirit, the third form in the Trinity.

The incarnation of Christ tends to a definiteness of personality in the second form of the Trinity quite alien to the vague and subtile suggestion of the appellation, Holy Ghost. We ought, on neither side, to be led to a greater or to a less sense of knowledge than that which actually belongs to us. If Christ becomes a distinct, enucleated portion of Deity, and the Spirit remains a vague, flitting agency, each result is largely the product of the imagination, and quite beyond our exact knowledge. So God discloses *himself* in Christ, and in the Spirit, and partially in one as in the other. It is the imagination rather than the intuition, in either case, that is likely to furnish the staple of our impressions; the form, therefore, rather than the substance of the belief that prevails with us.

Little as we can penetrate the essence of either Divine Disclosure, we are able to see why the doctrine of the Holy Spirit should have received peculiar prominence at the resumption of Christ. The disciples were not, to their own feelings, to be left alone, to be left comfortless. A more subtile, but not therefore a less divine and real, guidance was to be granted them. They were to enter into the spirit of the new salvation, the coming kingdom, and in it and by it to find immediate fellowship with the Divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This contact of the pure spirit with God, this feeding of the truth-loving soul with truth, its love and sympathy with sympathy and love, find a personal form in the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, a doctrine not less real, though more spiritual, than the revelation of God in Christ. Nor are we any more disturbed by supernatural forces attending on and enforcing the one revelation, than by those which waited on the other.

A purely supernatural faith and a profoundly natural one, a faith which looks on religious life as the giving of new powers, and one which regards it as the calling forth

of original faculties, will separate widely in the interpretation of the work of the Holy Spirit. The religionist is content to make its offices a mystery, a superinduction of forceful divine energies on effete or decaying life, the moralist—and we use the word again in our own signification—in firm allegiance to the free spirit within him, can not readily accept any interpretation which militates against the independent power of the soul, but looks upon the work of the Holy Spirit as God's constant, pervasive, spiritual ministration, under spiritual law, to the growth of the human spirit, led to seek and accept every regenerative influence. He would adopt into a careful phraseology the words of Peter, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit."

We have no more reason to suppose that God, in an occult way than in an open way, overbears the soul of man; indeed for the very reason that he does not do it openly, we have strong ground to believe that he does not do it secretly; that whatever is the action of the Holy Spirit it is entirely consistent with our liberty; that it is open to man to quench its light, and grieve its love. It is a characteristic of spirit to commune with spirit; such communion is an ordinary spiritual function. Language, action, the glance of an eye, a tacit sense of affinity in any way evoked, are its conditions. So souls draw strength from each other, take up and nourish each other, and find a wonderful enlargement of life. The All-inclusive, the Omnipotent Spirit, the Holy Spirit, not only may, but must, stand on like terms of ministration to finite spirits. Its mediums of suggestion are manifold. The light and aspiration, springing up directly in the soul, may seem to be, may be, an inspiration. So do we with less, though with more separate, sensible means of communication—and with less means because such determinate and exterior

ones—breathe our life into another, and awaken in him a new power. Let the key of spiritual intercourse be found, let the soul think of God, and think with God, and follow his unfolding truth and love as they present themselves, and the pervasive, spiritual Presence of the world becomes a momentary experience; the mind pillows itself on the purposes of God, and feels his power pulsating freely through it; his thought, like the waves of a yet more subtle ether, bears light and life everywhere. This will seem dreamy and obscure to one who is not wont to work under the spiritual laws of his being; so may the ties of friendship be to such an one a feeble web, though they grapple with hooks of steel the souls that heed them. To one who is spiritually alive, the doctrine of a Holy Spirit, a divine, quickening, omnipresent Power, may be a daily experience, as real as the busy, searching, theorizing thought which glances hourly out of the eyes of the scientist, and makes the world for him intellectual. Put rational insight for thought, love for enthusiasm, and we have a spiritual flame fed by the Father of Spirits.

Of this communion we cannot say as the religionist may say, "Efficacious Grace—the work of the Spirit, is altogether mysterious. Its effects are not to be explained, naturally, *i. e.*, by the laws which govern our intellectual and moral exercise."* We believe grace to be, in the deepest possible sense, natural, the overflow of the divine life on the human life, fitted by constitution to receive it and grow by it; so a plant is quickened by the energy of light, heat, actinic ray, streaming in from the far distant sun. The active, palpitating leaf, bathed in visible and invisible sun-forces, its circulation renewed in every channel, its pulse quick, is an image of the soul that is

* Systematic Theology, Hodge, vol. ii, p. 683.

awakened to the divine presence, and responding to a spiritual force.

It is impossible to define all the ways in which the Divine Spirit can touch and awaken the human spirit ; they are like unto, and far more numerous than, those by which we are made to feel the presence of each other. The cathedral puts sublimely, almost oppressively, upon us the intellectual force, the æsthetical sentiment, the worshipful thought of its architect. We can not, save by dullness, evade its presence, escape the atmosphere, which envelops it : far less can we, in this universe, at once upreared in rugged strength, and flowing on in flexible life, miss its divine power. While the basis of such an influence is natural, purely natural, profoundly natural, we admit, on sufficient evidence, the transcended limit, the visible supernatural hold. Yet we believe this spiritual agency more magnified by giving it a large natural range, than by rushing readily with it into the supernatural region. The honor of man, in the two attitudes of thought, has no comparison.

The work of the Holy Spirit is sanctification, in other words, the growing, the rearing under fellowship of the human soul, a work that, to the living, begins with life, and ends never. Conversion marks the first free, full concession to this commanding, persuasive work ; and may be hidden in an evenly illuminated history, or stand brightly out as an eventful era. To obey, to drink in the spirit of obedience ; to love, to enter into the joy of love ; to sacrifice and to cast out of the sacrifice the reluctant, egotistic, backward tendency, and to put in its place the spiritual affections, the foreshadowing enthusiasms of the coming heavenly kingdom ; to stand an integer of life fed by all the life, the sad facts and the joyful facts, the gifts visible and invisible, of God's universe, as gathered up and held together in holiness, this is sanctification.

It is a work without limits. Our demand for, our hope for, immortality is this our inexhaustible nature, that we can stand in living intercourse with the Infinite, and so share his life. The possibility of symmetrical, spiritual growth, and the impulse to it are found in our triple constitution, in our intellectual, emotional and voluntary powers. No one of the faculties can successfully and protractedly grow without the stimulative claims arising from the growth of the others. Any equilibrium of death, which might tend to overtake one, is forced back by the activity of the remaining two. The soul is normally awakened by insight, by truth, by light; but this insight as a force expends itself instantly on the emotions, calling forth affections in harmony with itself; while these affections, in turn, become the springs of action. But action quickens again insight, and even more than it, nourishes the feelings; feelings that increasingly become the atmosphere of the soul, reflecting, dispersing, coloring all its light. A pure intellectual truth is to the emotional apprehension of it by an enriched spirit, what a dazzling ray of sunlight, gliding through the empty spaces beyond the earth's mantle of air, without illuminating or warming them, is to the same ray, softened, diffused, glorified in the atmosphere we live in.

Simple intellectual progress becomes at length cold and barren. Some feel it a hopeless task even to attempt to enter on it. They are ready to accept tradition, and to forget their initial duty in handling their own powers. "Hardly," says Rousseau, "shall such an one—one who must guide his own thoughts—in his extreme old age, be quite sure what to believe, and it will be a marvel if he finds out before he dies in what faith he ought to live."* This is an intellectual difficulty, when only the intellect is

* Rousseau, by Morley, vol. ii, p. 274.

taken by itself. The whole man can find many centres of life, and enlarge safely from any of them. A pursuit of truth that runs in advance speculatively, may speedily embarrass itself. Truths which may be made to minister directly to the affections are not far to find, and, expended in action, lead the soul securely to others. The practical demand of the soul for truth is neither so rapid, nor so exact, as its purely speculative demand, and the way to truth, moreover, is far safer when pursued under the constant correction of experience and the affections. If the intellect is made primarily nutritive, performing its own functions reciprocally in connection with all the functions of life, it will not be found fatally defective. Plans, outlines, demand a precision, a rectilinear accuracy, which can be partially dispensed with in practice. A mistake of the intellect is fatal only when the heart is sick, and the will imbecile ; as unwholesome food is poison only to a system too weak to reject it. "Truth," says Landor, "is like the juice of the poppy, in small quantities it calms men, in larger heats and irritates them, and is attended by fatal consequences in its excess."* This is a fact of indigestion, not digestion ; and spiritual indigestion is the result of truth, so called, fed on without evoking the fitting affections, or building up character. So shortly it becomes, as in theological dogma, the heavy statements of a logical system, and not refreshing, spiritual facts, links in history, which quicken the emotions and nourish the manhood.

It is, therefore, the Spirit of God, a Spirit of Love, supremely present in acts of love, a Spirit who nourishes the affections, and who is sent of Christ to bring forward his kingdom, it is this Spirit, that can sanctify, that can cleanse and strengthen and vivify, the soul by truth, that

* Landor's Conversations, vol. i, p. 35.

can drop the seeds of a new year even in the cold, dead, autumnal soil, that follows the spasmodic fervor of our partial efforts.

Religion is constantly getting into the rut. There is a double work of the Spirit of Truth, first on the individual and through the individual on the church and on society ; the two instantly setting up their reactions, and limiting each other. Not merely is man free, the construction of his life is voluntary, character is the product of his will, and the organization of society the product of characters, characters whose mutual dependence it expresses. Hence progress, both individual and collective, is constantly mis-carrying. Men begin and refuse to complete their work ; they do it badly, and find quick arrest in it. In a thousand ways the weakness of the individual will, as a line of decay, penetrates society. Hence growth becomes a series of disasters even more than of triumphs, of corruptions that are the conditions of reform. Sanctification is a protracted struggle under adverse conditions, and the Spirit of God, which brings light out of darkness, which gives a personal force to the conquering power of truth and love,—love that comes loitering on in the footsteps of truth—becomes the refuge, the patience and the courage, of the believing heart. The soil is seen to be deepened by the decay of each season, and the next to give a better promise. The earnest soul thus waits in work on the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of God, moving on the face of the waters, and is first consoled, then encouraged, then astonished. The spirit is sanctified as it grows into the knowledge and life of God, as it grows into the knowledge and life of its spiritual environment. It has two inexhaustible directions of development, its fellowship with God, its fellowship with society, with the spiritual kingdom which encompasses it, and is forever coming. The narrow

life of the individual thus gathers breadth directly from God, indirectly from him in his entire spiritual work.

A plain condition of this sanctification is prayer, a constant, conscious casting of the soul on God. Prayer has its caricatures. "We often treat God in the same manner as we would treat some doting, or some passionate old man ; we feign, we flatter, we sing, we cry, we gesticulate."* But prayer remains none the less, feeble, blind and abused as it is, the essential relation of a free, dependent personality toward a personal God. Nor does it admit of inflexible, universal, natural law. Spirit, flexible, feeble, restricted in time, yet hoping, struggling, aspiring, can not nourish its affections on natural laws. Natural laws, as universal and unchangeable, distinctly understood, appall the soul ; they freeze its free currents like polar cold. They must do so for there is no freedom under them. Clear vision shows the assertion of such freedom to be the deceitful mirage of a thirsty soul. The spiritual must have been in the beginning back of the natural, it must throughout remain back of it ; deeper than it our passionate entreaty must find the ear of reason, the ear of God. The spiritual must hold the natural in solution. The natural may crystallize according to its own well-ordered nature, but the spiritual must be able at any moment to redissolve it, and so to rearrange it. If the natural is held in and under the spiritual, it becomes a means in its hand. The diamond shares the light that shines through it. But if the natural crowds back the spiritual, contains it and is not contained by it, measures it is not measured by it, then our personality loses the personality of God, or both sink into blind, fatalistic forces, and growth, freedom, sanctification disappear. There rolls in athwart the horizon the grand but crushing wheel of evolution, gathering like the involved

* Landor's *Conversations*, vol. i, p. 352.

storm, every living thing, and licking up the very dust of the earth. Personality can only thrive between the two elements, the fixed and the flexible, the material and the spiritual, the earth and the air. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is a perpetual protest against omnivorous force. We rejoice in it. It expresses the pervasive power of God, the spiritual breath of his universe, the divine life that is in it. It is strictly, preëminently a doctrine for the spirit of man. He who is a spirit is known as a Spirit ; is worshipped and loved and sought unto in spirit and in truth.

We remind the reader again, that the morality of which we have spoken is the coalescence of morality and religion, two drops newly ensphered at one centre ; that sanctification is the finishing up of what God began in creation ; and that nature is an out-putting of wisdom and power which may at any moment, and to any degree, be subsumed under the free life of God—a life that can no more be reduced to a proposition, crowded into a formula, than can that of man.

Spontaneity transcends logic in the same degree that it transcends force ; and unknits predestination, the dogma of the theologian, as readily as the necessary, coherent forces of the scientist ; unknits them freely on occasion, because it first knits them on occasion from the resources of its own being.

CHAPTER XIV.

Future Life.

WE accept the doctrine of immortality because of our moral nature. This demands it; this suffers destructive limitations without it; this nature it is that, uniting us sympathetically to God, makes way in us for the wisdom and love of God in their infinite sweep. From this form of proof it follows, that, as the urgent need of a future life is found in our moral constitution, those years are given to complete the cycle of these powers, and that a future claimed by the laws of our spiritual life is also to be interpreted by these laws. But the fundamental fact of our moral nature, of the government contained in it, and in the environment which responds to it, is "The soul that sinneth it shall die,"* taken with its reverse, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."†

We would give the fullest meaning to the words, *death* and *life*; looking upon sin as the distortion, decay and waste of our powers, and so facing death-ward, and upon righteousness as the harmonizing, preservation and invigoration of them, and so facing life-ward. The last passage is especially significant. It was addressed by Christ to the sister of Lazarus, and struck far beyond her thoughts, and the recognized conditions of the case. It asserted in its largest form the law of spiritual life as against the fact of death then present. It discloses so broad a principle, that the soul that can feel and accept it will look upon any disaster as the trough merely between the waves, that are one and all lifting it and bearing it onward. "The

* Ez. xviii, 20.

† John xi, 26.

soul that liveth—holds spiritual life—and believeth in me—the infinite and renewing source of that life—shall never die”—shall never suffer arrest of any kind. The grave thus becomes a passage from life to greater life.

The fundamental affirmations of the Scriptures put them in harmony with the natural, moral law ; they redeclare and reinforce the government of God contained therein. “We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”* Concede a future life, and concede it as the expansion, the fulfillment of this life, and we are at once placed under our spiritual constitution in the entire sweep of its powers, of its progressive, combining and recombining conditions. Revelation builds up on the principles, and returns constantly to the motives, contained in this truth of natural religion, immortality ; a truth that follows as a corollary from that first truth, the being of a personal God, with its implication of a spiritual government. From the nature of the proofs which sustain a future life, we infer that its rewards and punishments are in no sense arbitrary, scarcely positive ; but that they arise in immediate sequence to our action here, and are the completion of that action. We accept the sentiment expressed by Martineau, in reference to Revelation. “That could hardly be truth at all, which, after roaming the world and searching the soul for eighteen centuries, has found no natural ground on which to rest, and must wander as an *ipse dixit* still.”†

The involved principles of God’s natural, actual, moral government are evolved, pushed distinctly forward, in Revelation. There is a future life in completion of this life. The impulses and directions now established are deeply

* II Cor. v, 10.

† Studies of Christianity, p. 377.

interesting as having an exhaustless breadth of territory in which to expend themselves, in which to disclose their real character. A future life is to the individual what coming centuries are to the race ; transient causes acquire value through a permanent series of effects.

That Revelation, at the beginning, will state these facts more on the side of positive law than on that of moral law, more in their personal than in their natural features, is a matter of course, for this is the emphasis which the precise phase of human thought addressed requires. Even strictly natural events, ordinary history in its narration, take this presentation, the natural having found in thought no clear separation from the supernatural, and both being alike referable to God. Revelation is a scaffolding, which goes up with the building which it surrounds, not one that is reared to its full height in anticipation of the structure to which it ministers. As a scaffolding, it keeps level with the work, level with the need of the workmen, level with the times and occasions at its disposal ; and as a scaffolding, Revelation drops away in its exceptional features when the work is finished.

We start, therefore, our eschatology with the one initial truth which Revelation clearly eliminates from Natural Religion, and both enforce : " When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." This truth divides itself into three truths, the government of God is inherent in the righteous and the wicked act, and by one inseparable result discloses the character of the action, and goes forward to reward or to punish it ; on this natural basis alone, and in completion of it, do positive law and positive infliction find place. Exterior concomitants are in harmony with the interior lives they deal with, and this harmony is carried

* James i. 15.

forward by perpetual interaction. The rewards and punishments of a future life, as disclosed by Revelation, conform to this natural government, resting primarily on character, and secondarily on consonant conditions. This fact being the cardinal, intersecting point of all truths, natural and revealed, on this topic, truths that enthrone our moral nature and make it at once the ground and the interpretation of God's government, we fail to understand the reason on which a portion of the prevalent opinions of a future life rest. They seem to exist in oversight of that fundamental coherence of discipline which enables it to point forward, and lead forward.

It is very generally held that repentance is not invited, indeed, as a redemptive agent, is not admissible in another state; that the leading moral features of our present life are transient, giving place to fixed results quite at war with them. The future thus enters formally in completion of the present, but actually in abolition of it. This opinion is opposed to the very nature of sin and holiness; they do not allow this setting aside of their fundamental conditions. Sin, that it may remain sin, must be accompanied with the power of repentance. Sin is not a thing of the past alone, but renews itself every instant. It is essential to sin, if it is to remain sin, that it shall, at each decision, prefer wrong to right; as it is necessary that one holy shall remain in permanent concord with holiness. To the degree in which the sinner is cut off, by conditions foreign to himself, from obedience, is he cut off from sin, and loses his character. Character is a perdurable, present power that discloses itself along its entire career by choices. The bitterness of sin, and the smouldering heat that bitterness engenders, are due to the active repulsion between it and holiness, the persevering pressure which holiness brings to bear upon it. The activity of sin and so its soil

are evoked by the activity of holiness. The opportunity of repentance can not be taken from the sinner without subverting the moral conditions of his guilt, without removing holiness from him as a duty. We can never yield the axiom of all moral proof: Power and responsibility are commensurate. If we should, we could find nothing so plain as this again.

Neither can holiness, the Holy One, do otherwise than seek, enjoin, favor repentance. Holiness is antagonistic to sin, and its great victory lies, not in perpetuating and punishing it, but in removing it. To force, or to attempt to force an attitude of eternal transgression by removing the opportunities for repentance, the remedial effects of repentance, or the new governmental relations incident to repentance, would be to work for sin, not against it; to take the sinful, vengeful attitude toward sin, not the righteous one; to confront evil with evil, not evil with good. A redeemed sinner is a moral force infinitely transcending a chastised sinner. A criminal hastily crucified by the highway and the cross of Christ are scarcely more distinct in their lessons.

The moral government of God is too inherent and coherent to accept arbitrary bounds in this way, beyond which it becomes something quite different from itself hitherto; its methods and sentiments all reversed. Its principles are eternal, and under these principles what is fitting to-day, is fitting to-morrow and the day following. It is fitting always and every where to repent, hence it is ever fitting that the righteous should aid repentance; and this repentance as a fact must alter not less the will of God toward the sinner than the will of the sinner toward God. Of all moral forces, as the most perfect of all, God is least stubborn. These are the fundamental truths of sin and holiness, and we can not depart from them. If we

should yield them, we should weaken the whole superstructure of faith. Nothing weakens faith so much as unreason or unholiness in its own articles ; it is friable material in the solid wall. We can not establish the being of a holy God and of a future life by the force of our moral nature, and then proceed to set aside its first principles.

The view, then, that repentance is not sought for nor recognized in another life by the regnant moral Power, is quite inadmissible, since it puts that Power in conflict with the principles implanted in our own souls, and prevalent in the world about us. Repentance is always in order, always renovating, always in modification of moral conditions. Nor is it probable that repentance as a fact, will be wholly unknown in another life. We have no sufficient warrant for saying that no one of those even hard and mature in sin will repent, passing the bounds of this life. Up to these bounds repentance occasionally overtakes them, it may overtake them farther on. Though there is a rapid reduction of probabilities, as character develops, though there is a fearful momentum in sin, which we are only too prone to forget, we know of no absolute, natural limits between obedience and disobedience beyond which return is impossible, nor can we believe that the will of God establishes a bound more stringent than the moral forces themselves require. Our daily experience teaches us, that moral truths become suddenly and surprisingly operative all along the line of our present existence, and we may not, therefore, be hasty to affirm that repentance never comes to the openly wicked in a future life. We shall do well to understand the vigor of the forces with which we deal, their fearful liabilities ; but we shall not do well to make them other than they are, to push precipitately one man over the brink with the hope of saving by fear the one nearest him. This effort is plausible only

because we have dealt so much more with motives of fear than of love, with deterrent than attractive forces, that we are now willing to sacrifice the one to the other, to feel ourselves impotent without the wonted scourge in the right hand. If we could once learn to shift incentives from hand to hand, putting our hopes here and our dangers there, we should feel our losses less.

It is a much more violent supposition that repentance never comes to one out of the great masses of men whose characters have not been shaped here to a stubborn type by cogent truth. When we remember that to most men moral questions have at best received but an obscure expression, with very moderate motives, we fail to find any such vigor in the forces at work, or any such decision in the moral attitude assumed, as to foreclose forever this class of questions. Inertness doubtless there is, but we have not measured all the resources of moral influence. To assume easily and cheerfully an arrest of our moral nature is presumptuous and unrighteous, and the more so as this view is wont to keep vigorously alive these same moral susceptibilities merely that they may do the work of retribution. Intuitions that can no longer bless the soul are maintained simply to blast it. This can not be.

But a very large portion of the race have passed from under the conditions of this life at their very first assumption, when as yet they had scarcely begun to tell upon them for good or for evil. To declare in reference to these this great controversy of the soul, its struggle for life, ended, is, in the hard, un pitying conditions it imposes, its recklessness of salvation, downright wickedness, unless the proofs admit of no appeal. It is a belief against righteousness as it makes light of the chances of righteousness, the reaching of righteousness, on the part of a large portion of the race. The individual may be called on to accept

painful liabilities and grievous sacrifices under general laws, but for these concessions there come to him grand compensations in the divine government. The individual is gathered up in the prosperity of the community, and that community ultimately bestows all its wealth on him. But principles which should allow great portions of the human family to perish under conditions narrow, hard, hopeless and arbitrary, are an imputation on God's mercy which no system of theology can sustain. Such theories sacrifice first truths to second truths, truths of character to devices of government, and can never, therefore, find proof enough to support them. Our moral nature is the basis of our entire argument for the being of God ; subvert it in its fundamental principles, and the whole fabric gives way. An unmerciful and unjust God, one at war with our moral perceptions, can not be established ; for justice and mercy and our moral intuitions are our chief resources of proof. Lose this light and every object begins to flicker and grow obscure in this transcendental region.

A large number, also, die in infancy. The conditions for the formation of character, as a voluntary product, have not been so much as entered on. These, then, must either perish absolutely, or conditions of development be granted them elsewhere. If we accept the doctrine of immortality because of our free moral nature, no choice is left us. Character can be formed, and must be formed, in a future life. A supposition that God, in anticipation of character, aside from a spiritual nature unfolding by its own powers, under its own laws, reaches for the infant, in an overshadowing way, an issue of good or evil, springs from a view of the power of God, and of his method of using it, which finds no warrant in the world about us ; indeed, is in exact antagonism to the central principle or characteristic of a moral system. Such views of the scope of power are

irrational, against the moral reason ; we can only pass them, and wait for them to disappear as the light of our spiritual day increases. The salvation, if any, which is provided in our Christian faith for the children of the church, can not be of the nature of a contract. It, too, must find ground for itself in fundamental principles, those principles which make the spiritual universe to be ; to wit, that character is voluntary, that it determines the moral *status*, that it is that *status*.

But what will be the exact issue which this present life, as a moral life, will bring to us ? more especially what will be its issue to those who pass forward with perverted, constitutional forces, established or confirmed by their own action ? Very different answers to this question have been given, and vigorously defended from the Word of God ; each with a measure of success so far as a vigorous rendering of particular passages can give success. There are four replies that may readily be made. The first is, that questions of obedience and disobedience, under God's law, are closed in this life ; that the disobedient suffer forever the fruits of disobedience, and the obedient rejoice forever in the rewards of obedience ; that discipline is no longer moral, as being possessed of any redemptive force. This doctrine, very generally held, is made to rest almost exclusively on the Scriptures. It finds nothing to sustain it, as we have seen, in constitutional moral law, is in arrest of that law, and is closely united to doctrines that settle results chiefly by the will of God, a will that yields itself as *arbitrium*, not as wisdom, a will, therefore, of which reason can ask no explanations.

A second answer, also strongly urged from the Scriptures, is that of the annihilation of the wicked ; a third, that of their ultimate restoration, argued chiefly from the love of God and the redemptive force of truth ; while a

fourth, not venturing on a categorical reply, regards it as probable that farther discipline in a future state, may result, now in restoration, now in annihilation, and often be accompanied with protracted punishment. We make no mention of the opinion, that life ends the moral conflict, and that redemption follows at once for all on its conclusion. This belief is so utterly without grounds, either in reason or Revelation, as to call for no attention.

In forecasting the conditions of a future life, we have two sources of proof, our moral constitution, that is the present government of God which is shaping events for the future, which is inwrapping the future in the present, and the Scriptures. In estimating the Scriptural argument, which seems to us to have been pressed, under textual interpretation, quite beyond its true limits, we need to bear in mind several things. In the first place, the Bible assumes the great truths of natural religion, the being and attributes of God, and immortality; bestows no proof upon them, and scarcely gives them a direct assertion as opposed to their denial. Revelation, in its own unfolding, accepted these truths, as they lay in the minds of those addressed, made them indirectly clearer and firmer, and so built upon them. But in doing this, the germinant truths, already in the soil, were left to grow, to mature the life that was in them, and hence were not, and could not be, displaced by exact, full statements, setting forth both the facts and their precise form. This would have been to overlook the growth achieved, and to start growth anew with an interposed space, a break of organic force. This is a method that always seems possible to man, but we suspect it to be profoundly impossible, sure to be followed by a series of errors, that would travel backward all the untraveled area.

The doctrine of immortality is assumed and used at once to enforce the fundamental law of our being, ethical

and religious ; to wit, that the issues of life are in the life itself as inseparable from it ; " Out of the heart are the issues of life." We are wont to say, that the Scriptures never gratify an idle curiosity—a shallow statement of a profound truth. The remark poorly covers the facts to which it points. It springs from the idea, that the spirit of inspiration, the Holy Spirit, is always speaking to us from the fullness of divine resources, and so of design is keeping back one truth and bringing forward another. We believe the Scriptures rather to have arisen so directly for men and from men, the concrete men to whom and through whom they came, so to have taken hold of the spiritual experience at the time present, its tendencies and deficiencies, its truths and half-truths, and also to have been so permeated with the spiritual type of the writer, as not to have possessed a conscious horizon essentially larger than that actually disclosed, or, from the nature of the case, then useful. Aside from the words of Christ, we see no reason to believe that the thing known transcended the thing said,—indeed the two, as in the words of St. Paul, may have visibly grown together—and with Christ, the thing said accepts easily its incarnation, is habitually concessive to the real though elastic limitations put upon it by the ideas of those addressed.

Revelation, entering into a purely natural, ethical discipline to strengthen and enlarge it, expends its power on the enforcement of fundamental truths, and does not carry the mind forward to the expansion of thoughts or to details of facts essentially beyond the point it has actually reached in the spiritual mastery and use of knowledge. Mere facts not applicable to present experience, transcending its living wants, and not grounded in its comprehensions, are first useless, then pernicious. They divert the attention, suffer wrong explanations and wrong attach-

ments, take on perverted enforcements, are neither approached by the truths the mind possesses nor yield safely their own truths, and so lead the powers from their present growing points, anticipating the future without doing its work.

The primary enforcements, therefore, of what is said in the Bible of a future life lie along the well-traveled ways of virtue and vice, the one to be sought with exhaustless desire, the other to be shunned with untiring aversion. The language is to be interpreted under this primary purpose as always shaped toward it. It may by no means allow, then,—as if it were abstract language, a series of complete, independent propositions—the pressure of deductive logic to be brought to bear upon it, while every exuding inference is caught at as the substance and life of the truth. The richest grapes are to be eaten as grapes rather than flung into the wine-press. An example is offered by the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Its primary purpose exhausts the parable; and inferences are safe or unsafe as they run parallel with the line of thought or are divergent from it; as they are contemplated in the object of the speaker or are accidents of the image.

The future is dealt with pictorially in the Bible. We have a New Jerusalem, a river of life, a judgment day, an outer darkness, a worm that dieth not and a fire that is not quenched. This language, saturated with imagery,—imagery tending to a fixed popular form, and so gathering many incongruous accretions—is emphatic and safe only when looked on as suggestive, freighted with moral enforcements; and unsafe, even debasing, when taken as a precise statement of physical facts. We climb by the physical image to the spiritual truth, but when we return from the truth to the image by which we ascended, we are seeking most inconvenient lodgment on a ladder half-way between

earth and heaven. Nor does it answer for us, in making definite progress, to decline to analyze the thought and the expression, and assign each its value. This must be done the moment the need of it becomes a conscious one, the instant the intellect asks its own.

Accepting the authority of the Scriptures, we must yet inquire wisely what that authority is, and apply it in a way consonant with its scope and spirit. We are not to transcend the Scriptures by our interpretation of them; this even our reverence may lead us to do. We would remember that we can be far more sure of the general force, the moral tone, of a book, than of the precise value of particular passages; that the Bible may contain statements contradictory in form, but that its fundamental truths must be consistent; that as the direction of a river is not altered by its windings to the right or to the left, so the cardinal principles of the Scriptures are not affected by the incidental flexions of single statements, or by the imagery forced into their service. We are to follow the primary truth, the beam of light, and not be disturbed by its refractions, or bewildered by its chromatic dispersions, due to the medium through which it is passing. Under this general view, we will briefly inquire, how far the precise conditions of a future life are defined, or were intended to be defined, by Revelation.

In the spirit of our method, we would keep fundamental the fundamental truths of our moral being, so clearly accepted, so variously enforced by the word of God. "For by thy words—words as holding the heart—thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."* The harshness of the assertion of a final probation in this life, followed by extreme and unending punishment, is so great, as to quite drive its defenders from the court of the

* Matt. xii, 37.

moral reason, and put them for defence solely upon Biblical exegesis. But a conflict so declared between reason and Revelation, an avowed retreat from one to the other, are a very poor preparation for wise, penetrative, candid exposition. To accept Revelation on reason or under reason, and yet to put its fundamental methods so at war with the moral reason, that we must pass reason by as a condition precedent for their examination, is to introduce such a struggle of tendencies, such a conflict of arguments as greatly to damage our entire cause. While our proof works inward toward Revelation, it must also work outward from Revelation. Authority must be sustained by its fitness, or it is lost as authority.

Those who rest their belief in eternal punishment on the Word of God, seem to us to assert quite too much, to overlook in part the scope of Scriptural enforcement, and to lose sight of primary truths in the details of expression, the incidents of their unfolding. The facts that the doctrine of annihilation can also be urged with decisive vigor by precisely the same methods, and that a belief in restoration has its explicit, sweeping passages, go far to show in each case a mistaken or misapplied method of inquiry. Each party constructs its bulwark of texts, each by textual interpretation does more or less violence to the texts of its adversaries, and all forget that two classes of texts as texts can not bear down a third class. Texts are not *gens d'armes* deciding the conflict by numbers. Reason must show the relations of each assertion, and their lines of subordination. The two may as certainly yield to the one as the one to the two. A mind grounded, stranded, on a textual exegesis, is so far incapable of understanding the Bible as to put itself beyond the range of argument, is so far incapable of motion as to submit itself neither to wind nor water. There lies back of its present attitude a

method of education which must be undone and re-done before insight is possible.

Falling in one Sabbath afternoon with a fairly intelligent Shaker, near a thriving settlement of that community, I threw out, in conversation, a gentle inquiry by way of sounding his religious thoughts, and mapping their channels. He replied at once, in justification of the celibacy of their community, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he can not be my disciple."* The example is extreme, and so betrays only the more completely a frame of mind so irrational as to be quite beyond the reach of argument. The texts of such a disputant are the stones in his sling, which owe their execution not to their own weight, but to the violence with which they are hurled. A verbal coherence is all that the debater requires, the rest is force of will.

If we consider in order the passages in the Gospel of Mathew touching on the future condition of the wicked,—and this gospel is especially full on the theme—we shall see how capable they are of separate, textual perversion; and how collective, and how broad must be the view which harmonizes them by dropping them down from a general unqualified assertion each to its specific office. We first notice some important hints to a correct rendering of the words of Christ in reference to a future life. They have a practical, preceptive force rather than a didactic, explanatory one. The facts are referred to, not as matter to be confirmed or expounded, but as admitted truths, bearing on immediate action. The language is peculiarly figurative, and accepts the limits of thought involved in the figures; the figures rule the formal presentation. These figures are comparatively few, return more or less fre-

* Luke xiv, 26.

quently, and had evidently acquired, or were acquiring, a conventional force. The various passages thus fall into a few groups, with a marked tendency in some groups to a set phraseology, attached to one or other of the current images.

The first group is composed as follows. "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees ; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" iii, 10. "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner ; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" iii, 12. "Enter ye in at the strait gate : for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat" vii, 13. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire" vii, 19. "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell ; and great was the fall of it" vii, 27. "But he said, Nay ; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest ; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them ; but gather the wheat into my barn" xiii, 29, 30. There is considerable variety in these images, yet they are closely allied in form, and closely united in purpose. They emphasize the critical, dividing processes going on in the Jewish nation and in the spiritual world, and about to issue in the deeper, broader divisions of a future life. As to the kind of overthrow which awaits the wicked, the thought accepts the particular figure employed, and this, whether of fire or of water, suggests annihilation. But as this suggestion inheres in the image, and not in the thought, it has scarcely a perceptible force.

A second group includes the following passages: "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" viii, 11, 12. "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment; and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" xxii, 11, 12, 13. "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" xxiv, 50, 51. "And cast ye the unprofitable servant—him who had buried his talent—into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" xxv, 30. Here also the language takes its form from the illustrations and settles into two phrases, *outer darkness* and *weeping and gnashing of teeth*. The outer darkness stands contrasted with the marriage feast, the household of the master, the kingdom of God. In consistency with this representation, recurs, in uniform sequence, There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, a phrase expressing the mingled grief and anger of the rejected ones. How firm this phraseology became, and how definite its associations, is shown by two other passages which unite it with an image that does not so directly carry it, though not inconsistent with it, "The son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast

them into a furnace of fire ; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth " xiii, 41, 42. " So shall it be at the end of the world ; the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire ; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth " xiii, 49, 50.

These texts in consequence of this union, are somewhat incongruous. Outer darkness is a more suitable image in connection with grief and anger than is a furnace of fire. These passages, therefore, taken by themselves, might seem to be suggestive of protracted punishment, overbearing the conclusion of a quick retribution, indicated by a furnace of fire. But the primary thought lies elsewhere, the images are still under their own independent form, and the phrase, already sufficiently interpreted otherwise, may be attached, though less fittingly, to the speedy punishment of fire. None of these representations are of a nature to be put to the rack, to be questioned by inference, to be expanded by indirections, and if so used, they lead as easily to the doctrine of annihilation as to that of eternal punishment.

A third remarkable group, approaching the question in hand more nearly, may best be introduced by a passage from Mark. " If thy hand offend thee, cut it off ; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched ; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched " ix, 43, 44. There immediately follow two other illustrations, closing with the same language. To these are to be added the kindred representations in Matthew. " If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee ; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell " v, 29. Similar language is used

in the next verse concerning the right hand. On other occasions the language is modified by substituting hell-fire for hell, Matthew v, 22 and xviii, 9. These passages show their relation to each other by the use of the same word, *Gehenna*, translated *hell*. The word, its suggestions and imagery, are historical, not parabolic. They find their explanation in the facts of Jewish history, and in current Jewish belief, and not in figures open by their very nature to every mind. *Gehenna*, or the valley of Hinnom, had by a series of events, acquired a religious character, a representative force which now carried the word quite beyond its first meaning. In the same way, Mount Sinai, Mount Zion, and Jerusalem had a figurative value beyond their direct application. This valley opposed in position to Mount Zion, had been made by Manasseh the seat of the worship of Moloch. In consequence of this, it had been defiled by Josiah, cursed by the prophet Jeremiah, and used as the image of God's judgments. *Gehenna*, or the valley of Hinnom, had thus come to be more than the name of an adjacent locality, had gained a peculiar, figurative value, was associated with ideas that found fitting expression in its facts, yet quite transcended them. Made the receptacle of the filth of the city, of dead animals fed on by worms or consumed by fire, it easily furnished an imagery of death other than physical, and flames more than natural. This current image of divine judgment, this local presentation of a field of punishment as contrasted with Jerusalem, the Kingdom of Heaven, Christ employs; and doubtless much in the form in which he found it. He introduces it without explanation, passes not beyond its suggestions, and drops it without comment. Hell is the *Gehenna* of execration, the place of defilement, of unclean things, unquenched fires, and undying worms. In one assertion it is the *Gehenna* of fire, in the associated pas-

sage it is everlasting fire, fires perpetually fed by the ever returning filth of the city ; or, in the deeper fact that lies back of the images, hell is the Gehenna of incessant punishment following upon incessant sin, the ordination as lasting as the fact. Gehenna takes the adjective everlasting, (Matt. xviii, 8) as it takes the limitation, the Gehenna *of fire*, (Matt. xviii, 9) by virtue of its peculiar and permanent character, its settled facts and relations. We are also, in weighing the force of the adjective, *everlasting*, to remember, that the valley was the image as much of national judgments as of personal punishments, and so of necessity carries, in a portion of its religious force, the idea of temporal and temporary evils. The everlasting attaches to the relation and the principle the valley expresses, rather than to the incidents of its history, the punishments made to transpire in it. If we regard the limitations thrown about the words of Christ ; first, by the direct moral lesson they were brought forward to enforce ; second, by the conventional character of the language used ; and third, by the imagery itself in its own nature and historic force, we must certainly be slow to affirm, that there is here any declaration beyond the fact and certainty of punishment, or that its limits are, or were intended to be, settled by it. It may be thought that the foundation for the statement, that fires were maintained in the valley of Hinnom for the consumption of offal, is slight. This is true, but the language, "Where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched," is of so fixed and so peculiar a nature, the images of a fire and a worm are so incongruous with each other as to call for a historic explanation, and to lend probability to a plausible one. The images help the statement, as the statement reconciles the images and unites them with Gehenna. This rendering also gathers strong confirmation from Is. lxvi, 24. "And they shall

go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched: and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Evidently the words, "the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched," had found currency before the time of Christ, and rested for explanation on a definite physical fact, and probably a general custom.

There remain in Matthew but two other passages, "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" xxv, 41. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal" xxv, 46. These words take their color from the image of the last group of texts. Did not the language of our Saviour on this subject return so constantly to a few forms, we should not feel this to be true. If his words were variable, suggested by each new occasion; if they passed easily beyond current ideas and current expression; if, disregarding the prevalent convictions, they entered freely by way of disclosure into the facts and their method, then we might regard the language, everlasting fire, everlasting punishment, as fresh additive assertions, even though standing somewhat alone. If, however, we remark how closely the words of Christ, in each instance, return to definite images, current convictions, fixed phraseology, as if he picked up the expression, the thought nearest him, by way simply of enforcement, we shall almost necessarily associate these slightly modified phrases with previous ones, and the eternal fire of Matt. xxv, 41, becomes the eternal fire of Matt. xviii, 8, while this is the fire of Gehenna. The correlative expression of the 46th verse then receives the same measurement, the language of this twenty-fifth chapter falls into harmony with that elsewhere employed, and is explained by the facts and imagery of

the valley of Hinnom. If this be true, there is here no affirmation concerning the issues, methods, or limits of punishment, but only of the settled fact of punishment. But should we venture to push the texts to their logical limits, we arrive at annihilation quite as easily as at eternal punishment. If we take the forty-first verse as an initiative, which it is by position, destruction would seem to follow naturally from the image used. This is the action of fire, and if its most direct and natural results are to be reversed, it would seem that it must be done by plain indication. The adjective everlasting is not such an indication. Fires may be everlasting, though the material of them is rapidly consumed. A process and a principle may be eternal, though the stages of the one or the applications of the other are transient. In reference to the primary purpose, the announcement of judgment, judgment for transgressors, evidently this certainty, this eternity of principle, expressed in the eternity of the agencies that execute it, is quite as directly in order as a deterrent, as would be the other fact, if a fact, of the duration of punishment. It is also one which may be as certainly contained in the language, and may as readily exhaust it. Considering, therefore, the conflict of inferences in the language of the New Testament if we enter upon them, and that they all are but inferences, inferences not included in the primary purpose, the safer, sounder, more conservative opinion is, that the general method of Revelation is applicable also to the words of Christ, and that he busies himself with principles, primary truths, to the oversight of details having little to do with action, and either involved in the moral government enforced, or properly waiting on the unfolding of time. We are the more persuaded of this, when we reflect how easy and natural it would have been to set at rest the doubt now honestly entertained as to the

fact of the hopelessness and eternity of future punishments, if this had really been the topic under consideration ; and how greatly moral principles demand such a settlement, if the conclusion to be reached is one so antagonistic to them as this of their total and speedy arrest. If moral laws are to have full sweep, then their details of execution are secondary in importance, but if these details are to overbear those laws, that fact calls for speedy and decisive announcement, as altering all the conditions of conduct. We are certainly to infer the permanence of moral laws in the absence of satisfactory proof to the contrary.

There is a passage in Matthew whose inferences lead us to farther probation. "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him ; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" xii, 32. We do not urge the conclusion because it is in the text a side issue. There is also a significant fact presented by J. J. Murphy in *The Scientific Bases of Faith*. The adjective *eternal* is never applied to death. The antithesis to eternal life so naturally made thereby is not made. "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed ? for the end of those things is *death*. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end *eternal life*. For the *wages* of *sin* is *death*, but the *gift* of *God* is *eternal life*, through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

"A three-fold contrast is here indicated ; *wages* and *gift*, *sin* and *God*, *death*, not necessarily eternal, and *eternal life*. It seems impossible to understand why St. Paul should have avoided the use of so appropriate, so impressive, and so self-suggesting an expression as eternal death would have been in such a place as this, had he believed the

* Rom. vi, 21-23.

meaning it conveyed to be true. No doubt a single negative instance is seldom conclusive; and for that reason I go on to quote others."* He then cites, Rom. v, 21; Rom. ii, 5-10; Gal. vi, 8.

We have dealt with one Evangelist, not as exhausting, but as fairly representing the Scriptural argument, and as indicating the spirit of the exegesis which leads to the conclusion that the Scriptures enforce a future life as the continuation of this life, as holding its moral issues, and confine themselves to this fundamental preceptive or practical fact. We are thus left in our anticipations under our moral constitution, waiting on its laws as paths of life, and compelled to search deeply into its principles for our guidance. Revelation forces us back on nature, a nature of divine ordination for our discipline. In other words, it restores our feet to the very highways which from the beginning were thrown up for us, but from which we had strayed. What we venture to suggest concerning the conditions of a future life, concerning the resurrection, is not offered as a doctrine. Beyond the fact of a future life, a resurrection as involved therein,—something quite diverse from what is usually asserted under the word—and continuous treatment under a progressive spiritual law, the data are too meagre and insecure to offer us final conclusions. It is rather our desire to escape such conclusions, standing as many of them do in the way of rational thought, hampering moral principles, and turning into unqualified assertions forms of statement incident to a peculiar phase of religious life. Dogmas that interrupt growth, the free expansion of principles, insights, hopes, as they pertain either to the character of God or our development under his government, are to be deprecated. A field closed by inadequate statements we have striven to open, and have

no desire to reclose it by other insufficient presentations. The mind must be at liberty to entertain its own best suggestions under the truth present to it. To allow these in turn to become inflexible is to renew the labor now gone through with. Dogma does its true work when it is the fruit of progress, ministers in turn to progress, and gives way to progress. The forms of facts that are so much beyond us as those of a future life, must remain peculiarly flexible, leaving at all times and under all lights the fundamental principles of a moral discipline freely operative.

We object to the doctrines of eternal punishment, annihilation and restoration, because they pronounce on results dogmatically with insufficient proof; and because they interpose their positive statements in the path of free, spiritual development. Each of them constrains and limits the moral forces though they do it very unequally, restoration less than annihilation, and annihilation less than eternal punishment. This dogma lies directly athwart the line of spiritual unfolding. Few spectacles would be more barren morally, nay more repulsive morally, than eternal punishment without the opportunity of repentance; government cut short in every line of influence save that of infliction. Punishment so imposed drops for the parties directly implicated every element of discipline, ceases to flow from an existing moral state infolding and handling moral forces, and is simply a dreadful deterrent to transgression, provided with vast expenditure of suffering, for those who have not so stumbled and fallen. So far as any moral influence is referable to it, it is the very lowest, and must issue in a spiritual state of the same low description. But who are these parties who need such fearful restraint put upon them at the expense of others? for whom is this lesson provided? We trust not the holy in Heaven, while they can scarcely be the impenitent on earth. This

would be inconsistent with the scheme, as the eternity of punishment ought not to be requisite to impress those who take part in so transient a state of things as the earthly one is thought to be ; it would be a terrible entail to follow on forever after these transactions had been closed. Moreover, if this be the end of punishment, hell should be uncovered to our view, not hidden from it ; the slightest economy and kindness would teach us this. Those who defend such a disastrous, such an increasingly dreadful issue, one that quickly palls on the moral perception from its unwearying, unwavering intensity, retreat shortly to the idea of justice as its sufficient reason. This sentiment refuses to accept and sustain such a result. If we allow justice as a simple impulse to press directly toward its own object, uncontrolled by wisdom, inflexible to other ends, it still can not explain infinite punishment as attached without remedy to the sins of this life. No single sin, as one act, can deserve infinite punishment. That it does so is an assertion quite arbitrary. Sin can not get a scope beyond its finite, restricted conditions. It can not be one thing to the mind that commits it, and another thing wholly in the retributions that follow it. Sin is defined by the free, intelligent act which makes it to be sin ; sin in a feeble, blind spirit can not, therefore, at once waste the righteousness of Heaven or weary it, nor at once contract the guilt of hell. Sin measures itself in the conscious resistance it offers to holiness, and requires time for growth, time wherein to strengthen itself, precisely as does righteousness. If justice annexed such results to one sin, it would have no sufficient reserve of resources with which to treat later sins. Sin sinks in scope to the soul that commits it, and can not, in a sudden, unforeseen way, plunge a soul into hell. There is here such a confusion of ideas as to rob our moral nature of all soberness and proportion,

as to make of it a most fearful riddle. Blindness and suddenness reduce sin—one *may* stumble in the dark—and put limitation on punishment. The moment we allow justice to slip the restraints of wisdom, we find ourselves juggling with words. We are led to say that sin against an infinite law demands an infinite penalty, and we handle our sanctions in tricky fashion as weights wherewith we bring our moral mechanism to equilibrium, not as methods whereby men are schooled in God's wisdom and love.

"No subtlety of logic, no weight of authority, will induce rightly constituted minds, which allow themselves to reason at all, to admit that the sins or failings of Time *can* merit the retribution of eternity—that finite natures *can*, by any guilt of which they are capable, draw upon themselves torments infinite either in essence or duration. Divines tell us—and we all accept the saying—that no virtue on the part of frail and feeble creatures like ourselves can *merit* an eternal Heaven ; but when they demand our assent to the opposite and contradictory assertion that the shortcomings and backslidings of the same creatures can and do merit an everlasting hell, we are revolted by the inconsistency, and shrink back from the corollary involved in the latter proposition."* The truth is we can no more regard hell as a matter of merits than Heaven. A system of merits and demerits is quite too narrow to measure, quite too weak to curb, moral forces.

Punishment as a moral agency, as a just and also a wise agency, follows naturally and closely upon sin ; is a disclosure of its character, tends to arrest sin, instructs the sinner, deters the spectator, and struggles to restore all feet to the law. It is as redemptive as grace and forgiveness, is harsh only because it deals with violent agents, and fails only because the sinner will not suffer rebuke.

* Enigmas of Life, p. 271.

Positive inflictions serve only to hasten the disclosures, quicken the remedies, and emphasize the lessons of natural law, pushing them at once into the foreground, and articulating them in command. Punishment, in reference to him who suffers it, him who inflicts it, him who beholds it, admits of no other ends in a righteous government—one that loves righteousness, not one that simply declines to sin—than this of redemption. In human government punishment may sink to the low level of fear, of constraint; but there is in it, so used, no spring to virtue, no regenerative vigor; it is fortunate if it becomes even a dead-lock in the decline to vice.

The punishments of another life, to maintain their moral vigor, to present themselves as new issues under progressive procedure, as new revelation in spiritual development, must be dealing not with the sins of a remote past, but with the sinner of the hour, fitting his conditions to the tendencies, perceptions, possibilities present to him, allowing the disasters of sin to submerge and resubmerge him as the sins return, and giving to the lost germs of life whatever quickening influence they are capable of receiving. The sinner is thus punished not merely because he has been a sinner, but because he *is* a sinner, and is still battling with the laws of life. The fruits of sin are not arbitrary, they are not separable from sin itself, they are not a product of will, even the divine will, but of wisdom, even the divine wisdom, expressed in the spiritual, and the concurrent physical, constitution of the world. Punishment relaxes as disobedience relaxes, and reward takes its place as righteousness intervenes. In the precise degree in which we make punishment an infliction, resting on the will of the ruler, in which we separate it from the sin on the grounds of which it is imposed; in the degree in which we make fear its moral force, do we obscure the

spiritual history of the world, and put back spiritual growth. The region of fear is behind us, not before us. Fear, by its implication with higher forces, does subserve a moral purpose, but a very limited one. The plough that breaks up the soil has little to do with the cultivation that follows. To re-plough the sown field is to destroy the seed. To introduce fear afresh, when the mind is coming under the persuasion of truth and love, is to arrest or to disturb its living processes. Fear so used obscures the motives to obedience, represses the affections ready to break forth, and cuts short the experience in its truly spiritual features.

Many are fearful of reducing the motives to obedience by a view of punishment which appeals less directly and unreservedly to the sense of danger than this of instant and final damnation. They forget many things. They forget the punishments involved in sin itself under the divine law, and fail to urge them. Their attention is occupied by positive penalties to the oversight of natural ones. The dreadful character of sin thus gives place to the dreadful consequences of sin, and its disasters are traced not to itself but to an exterior ordinance. The sinner is ruined, but owes his ruin not so much to himself as to God. They forget how quickly the soul, if it shall yield to fear, and seek God, will require wisdom, love, patience, to feed its piety ; and how wholly diverse must be that later presentation which is to call out and cherish its affections from this earlier one, thought so efficient in initiating its religious life. They forget how little, after all, fear accomplishes, how few are arrested by it, how certainly, as a motive, it is overworked, punishment becoming remote, unreal, incredible from the dreadful stress put upon it, and how frequently those inclined by it to obedience fall off again because of the poor, hard conditions which accom-

pany its presentation. It behooves us always to inquire, in a simple way, into truth, believing that truth will justify itself in its fruits. Aside from this, can we afford to yield so much to fear, to so obscure by it the spiritual law, the character and the love of God? Can we profit by a retreat to the Inferno of Dante as our religious arsenal? The terrors by which a flock are frightened into a fold may lead them to leap its inclosure at the first opportunity. We shall do well to provide less for conversion, often a disappointing process, and do more for sanctification, which is sure to draw all things after it with a divine power.

If the doctrine of eternal punishment is the foundation of religion, is "the basis of the missionary system," then religion and the missionary system are by so much less exalted than we thought them. It is our one great objection to the doctrine, that, with its retinue of fears, it pushes into the foreground, displaces moral forces, disturbs the affections, makes callous the soul first to gentler truths, then to all truths by the concentration and heat of its motives, and, if seemingly strong to initiate a movement, has no power to direct and sustain it. We can wait for missionaries of love and salvation till they come, till they are drawn onward as much by the things to be won as by those to be escaped, till that which attracts them is holiness, and that which repels them is sin.

We believe that Christianity so far has suffered, and grievously suffered, by the undue weight given to fear, by the induration incident to it, by the obscuration and distortion of higher truths. It is possible, as we all know, to brighten the flames of hell with a very human and very devilish breath. The doctrine has been as much indebted, we fear, for its prevalence to what is tyrannical and cruel in the human heart as to what is just and merciful in it. It was not an accident that it culminated in intensity of

delineation in the mediæval church ; that Dante became its prophet. Certain it is that in our time it has often stood in the way of pure, gentle and heavenly sensibilities. " I have never seen a particle of light thrown on these subjects, that has given a moment's ease to my tortured mind ; nor have I an explanation to offer, or a thought to suggest, that would be of relief to you. I trust other men—as they profess to do—understand this better than I do, and that they have not the anguish of spirit which I have ; but I confess, when I look on a world of sinners and of sufferers ; upon death-beds and grave-yards ; upon the world of woe filled with hosts to suffer forever ; when I see my friends, my parents, my family, my people, my fellow-citizens ; when I look upon a whole race, all involved in this sin and danger, and when I see the great mass of them wholly unconcerned, and when I feel that God only can save them, and yet He does not do it—I am struck dumb. It is all dark, dark, dark to my soul, and I can not disguise it."* It is plain that this darkness stood opposed to the light of the moral, the religious nature, and was deepened, greatly deepened, by prevalent exegesis. Yet this result is far better than the opposite one, a quiet acceptance of the alleged truths.

Certain is it also, that many have declined to believe in the real disasters of sin because pressed with these fictitious ones, and have either denied altogether future punishment, or given it a purely formal assent. " Though theologians have virtually all but destroyed popular faith in the conventional place of punishment by the language in which they have habitually described it, and the incredibilities with which they have mixed it up, surely, surely it is not impossible to imagine a future world of retribution

* Albert Barnes, *Practical Sermons*, pp. 123, 128 ; C. F. Hudson's *Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 55.

in such form and coloring as shall be easy and natural to realize, as shall be, not only *possible* to believe, but impossible to disbelieve; a world of which we shall feel that, if it exist at all, it must be such as we delineate." * This freedom to expand our thoughts is the freedom to work out spiritual problems, and carry on spiritual life.

The doctrine of annihilation we can not accept; it also lacks explicit proof, and throws unnecessary limitations on moral movements. Human spirits are passing onward with tendencies undeveloped, issues not made up; we see no reason for pronouncing flexible, growing processes complete at a certain line, the bound of life; and settling, in an off-hand way, all questions on the basis of this assertion. Here, too, dogma enters in to disturb moral forces, whose development it is its sole purpose to explain. A belief in the final restitution of all is far more admissible as far more concurrent with our moral sentiments. Yet it seems to us to lack that degree of proof necessary to make of it a doctrine. If repentance is always possible, equally so is disobedience. If punishment brings instruction and rebuke, so does the sin punished pervert the perceptions and deaden the sensibilities. Sin works toward extinction, destruction in the physical, the intellectual, and the moral constitution; that it may not in some instances reach it, who can say? The universe may free itself in more ways than one. Sin may be eliminated by obedience and disobedience alike, though at opposite ends of the scale of life. Sin, when it is finished, may bring forth death. While punishment is redemptive, sin is destructive; the two war with each other, nor can we certainly, in each case, give the victory to one or the other. We would gladly affirm restoration, but the deadly nature of sin is too great to allow us.

* Enigmas of Life, p. 275.

The same line of thought precludes our asserting the immediate sinlessness of the saved. Our fundamental principles are, that God's government is continuous, with its laws and forces planted in the human soul ; that another life is united in natural sequence to this life ; that its conditions and directions are in completion of those here established ; that righteousness is righteousness, to wit, the activity of a mind and heart lifted by insight and choice into obedience ; that the coherence of moral truths, the consistency of the divine character, the consecutiveness of government, and so of discipline under it, constitute our guide to the future, as they do to the lines of obedience here ; and that they express toward us, and concentrate upon us, the pleasure of God. Sin then is possible in Heaven, is actual there, not as a predominant impulse, but as a desultory or a defective one. In other words, probation, activity, the mastery of our own lives, are not lost to us either as obedient or disobedient in another life. God no more constrains holiness than he constrains sin ; he no more supplements feeble powers in obedience than he removes them in disobedience, no more performs for us the neglected work of life than deters us from ourselves undertaking it. New companionships, new and better external conditions, constitutional conditions, may do something, they can not alter the essential nature of virtue, nor make the imperfect the perfect spirit. They are aids, not powers. We fear that a belief in sinlessness is sometimes due to a spirit that shirks its own labors under the appearance of honoring the gifts of God. We stand for law, God's law, which is full, however, of his mercies.

This view does not seem to us to be untrue to the Scriptures ; while the opposite view seems to us the result of those complex obscurations and entanglements of spiritual truths which follow from regarding holiness itself as a

gift, and moral states as subjects of decree and outside settlement. If we infringe upon the integrity of moral states, the moral life shrinks away, and the moral problem becomes a physical or governmental adjustment quite alien to itself. If righteousness is exclusively the product of the soul's activity, incident to that activity, and quite beyond the range of power ; if spiritual activity is the product of every divine gift truly appropriated, and the condition of each farther gift to be appropriated ; if growing activities constitute the first term in growing blessedness, as we believe them to do, then the soul's choices can not cease with death, nor can the soul desire them to be shaped otherwise than by its own renewing and renewed effort. The fundamental fact in the present spiritual system is growth, a voluntary concurrence with living forces, but error, deficiency, vacillation are incident to growth, since under it affections follow upon insights, and actions upon both, renewing again the circuits of life. But hesitancy and delay are incident, and must remain incident, to the voluntary, complex changes that fall to human character. A sufficient and unwavering line of progress would belong to a complete, not to a partial, nature ; one perfected by growth, rather than one being perfected under growth. Growth is higher adaptation, hence implies the need of it ; is a present state conditioned by the deficiencies of a previous one, and so one that can not be cut loose from its inheritances.

The entire instruction of the Bible, all proportioning of moral results to moral activities, proceed on the supposition that the entail of sin is not one that can be arbitrarily cut short. If holiness were a gift, an equal and common gift to the redeemed, then might it bring equal and common happiness ; but as a variable product, it must yield variable results. It *does* yield variable results every hour.

When shall this, its essential nature, be changed? If we are pressed by single passages that seem directly to exclude sin from Heaven, we ask for a wider interpretation of them, akin to that we give to other passages touching a like point. Indeed, the assertion of sinlessness is more explicit in reference to this life than in reference to another. "We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."* There is really no difficulty in this assertion; a movement is characterized by features which belong to it in its perfect form, rather than by those which belong to it in its partial form; it is spoken of under its own results, rather than under results associated with it, but alien to it. But if this sinlessness can be affirmed of the begotten of God under present conditions without carrying with it the perfection of the religious life, it may also in a future state.

If it be said that we reason from natural and transient to supernatural and permanent facts in a very direct anthropomorphic way, we in fact assent to the statement and find our certainty in this close coherence of method. We are afraid of an argument that infers the being of God from a moral government in the world, and then subverts that government by the character of God. The supernatural, secondary as it is in thought, proof, and relation, to the natural, can not stand, save as it is organically united to this body of law about us. This has been the drift of all we have said, and must be the drift of any rational procedure, finding its data in known facts. Yet we are quite willing often to fall back on the phrase, *It seems to us*, as we are imposing no doctrine, and the value of what we say must be found in the light it gives to the mind which receives it. It is the coherence of truths that

* 1 John, v, 18.

we are in search of, and here alone it is that we offer aid, and to those only who feel some need of it. In this effort, the Scriptures are not comprehensive truths inclosing and expounding all others, but coördinate truths, to be inclosed with others in one system.

There remain two points in reference to which the Christian church, chiefly under the guidance of the sacred writers, have shaped a creed,—the judgment and the resurrection. It has been very difficult to frame a satisfactory faith on these points, especially the last. The difficulty has arisen from an exegesis too closely bound to the framework of thought, to material and transitional ideas; too little penetrative into the spirit of truth, too little apprehensive of the breadth of its work. Nothing but a strong tendency to literalism would lead us to regard the day of judgment, referred to in the Word of God, as the precise statement of a fact. The New Jerusalem, with its gates of pearl, its streets of gold, its tree of life, its walls equal in length and breadth and height, is hardly more figurative, hardly more beyond the range of coherent things. A judgment-day approaches a physical impossibility, and, as a transaction within the scope of the human mind, is certainly a moral one. The great throne, the vast throng, the open books, though fitting images, would be most incongruous and unmanageable facts, so incongruous as to make it a trespass on reason to entertain them as a bald assertion. What means could gather such an assembly, what natural forces control it, what purpose be met by it; what human thought, by way of instruction, could take in its procedure? It would be an irreconcilable medley of the natural and supernatural, an effort to reach knowledge and impression by a method incoherent, and, judged by the normal powers of the mind, preposterous. Such discordant elements, the natural escaping at every point into

the supernatural, can only be kept together in vision-land.

A day of judgment, and so of separation, is a single, collective picture of what transpires constantly and everywhere in the searching and sifting government of God. Each goes, is ever going, to his own place, and needs not to be recalled thence, that he may be formally judged and restored hither. Judgment and penalty overtake the soul with no help from the halting, blundering forms of human justice.

The doctrine of a resurrection, that is of a restoration of the dead, each to a body in some way intimately associated with the earthly body, the union to take place at some undefined future time known as the last day, is a belief closely allied with that of a day of judgment, is burdened with the same awkward concomitants, and arrests in a like aimless, futile way the continuous flow of moral forces. Passing the scientific impossibilities or improbabilities, evaded if not removed by evoking the supernatural, and by declining to define the relation of the celestial to the terrestrial body, we are still incumbered with the incongruity of the entire conception. It is difficult to understand how any tangible connection can be established between a body raised at a remote period and this present body, rapidly dissolving and redissolving into the physical elements about it, or what possible purpose, physical or spiritual, could be subserved by such a connection; what principle in either world could be made to turn upon it. It seems to us an assertion of immense difficulty and perplexity made for no apparent purpose, and one that rests on language simply concessive to current opinion. A much greater embarrassment in this doctrine than that of adjuncts and conditions of whose possibilities we know so little, is the intermediate state of the dead implied in it,

and the halting of the events of eternity waiting upon the completion of those in time. This is man's mechanism, not the march of the thought and power of God.

The world has stood long, it promises to stand much longer. The foundations of moral order are just appearing; the reconstructions of society remain chiefly to be made. From this system of things, of great, of indefinite, duration, the dead are divorced. Why should not their lives take up at once elsewhere their own issues, and carry them continuously forward? The imagination has at this point been very tyrannical. Men have been unable to conceive of life save in its associations with this life, and so have striven to interlace another state of being in its events with existing conditions. The results have been motley conceptions, the product of a fancy straitened by physical surroundings, and compelled to paint its heavenly picture in earthly colors. The spiritual doctrine of a future life constrains us to assert an immediate restoration of conscious being, under conditions and forms quite unknown. The conception of a remote resurrection of the body is shaped in concession to physical influences, a failing imagination, and in opposition to a close, living, spiritual dependence, and to those intuitions of the moral nature which build the future. It may do well as transient imagery, it does poorly as permanent fact. This lapse of our spiritual life for an æon, in the light of God's genetic, coherent methods, demands most explicit proof. If, however, the dead have a conscious and progressive life in an intermediate state, then a remote resurrection rules itself out as a superfluity; since events will have passed quite beyond it. Inserted far on in the future, it could only be a disturbance, the reappearance of an effete force.

But is there not much in the Word of God which con-

strains this view? It is hardly possible to construct a clear and coherent doctrine on this topic from Revelation under the guidance of textual exegesis. The reason is not difficult to be found. The doctrine of a future life is constantly implied and clearly asserted, and a doctrine of resurrection as incident thereto and associated therewith. But this concomitant fact, which, in a particular form, was so united to the belief in a future life that the two articles reciprocally carried the one the other, is not laid down with distinct definition. It is left, as to its nature and circumstances, to indirection and inference, while the language employed is tinged by transient and Jewish beliefs. It can hardly be said, that the doctrine of a resurrection, as disconnected from the associated idea of a future life, has any preceptive moral force, that any statement or principle is made to turn upon it. In other words, the doctrine of a resurrection is swallowed up in the doctrine of immortality, and receives no distinct didactic statement; nor is it at any time made pivotal in the progress of truth.

There must be limits to any Revelation. All religious truth can not be given, much less can all the bearings of religious truth. In fact, the portion that can at any one time be profitably given and received is very limited. If these bounds are passed, confusion and error are the result. Revelation, then, must have close restrictions; but wherever these restrictions are placed, important truths will be approached, yet passed by. Along these limits inference will be at fault, since the truth or portion of truth involved in the topic, yet omitted from full didactic statement, will remain under faulty, partial, conventional expression. Any process of definition must have an end, as every new definition will give us new and undefined words. It is often safer not to define at all than it is to

enter on this effort, since the mind is thus put from the beginning on its powers of comprehension, and not forsaken in the midst of a movement. Language is left variable, and out of its variability the thoughts catch a subtile force not sufficiently held in any one precise word. To us Revelation seems to direct itself thus freely to general principles, to pregnant practical truths, to the existing exigencies of spiritual life, and to pass on either hand the details of facts, whether of science or of religion, whether of the physical construction of history in the past and present, or the spiritual construction of it in the future. These inquiries as aside from its purpose, aside from the knowledge of the time, aside often from the knowledge of the agents employed, would have been futile and disturbing. Revelation, instead of being the concentrate life and inspiration of the period, would have sunk to quite a secondary office, that of diffusing knowledge.

The doctrine of a resurrection, in its formal features, its correctness or incorrectness of detail, is one of these marginal truths. The cardinal assertion of a life beyond the grave is made, its conditions are left to expanding insight and to time. The spiritual life, like other lives, must clear itself of obstructions,—obstructions which, for the moments passing, were doubtless aids—and do its own work.

We do not and can not accept that view of Revelation which makes its utterances precise statements, available to their utmost limits, along all lines of interpretation. There is more frequently but one resultant force, one resultant direction, and beyond this every thing is uncertain. On the subject of the resurrection there were special influences to shape the forms of expression, and color the imagery—the prevalent Jewish faith, and the second coming of Christ. The Jewish doctrine gave naturally the termi-

nology of the New Testament, and subjected the thought to its suggestions. This was unavoidable without a direct effort of Christ to reconstruct thought and language on this topic. This he does not seem to have attempted, aside from a few very penetrative and suggestive words. There were two tendencies in Jewish faith which served to carry the resurrection forward, and add it as a distinct and peculiar event at the last day. The first of these was the vague, unreal, unjoyous impressions which attended, in the minds of the Jews, upon Sheol, the abode of the dead, the region of shades. There was nothing here, either in good or evil, tangible and firm enough to satisfy the feelings. The second tendency, strengthened by a belief in a New Jerusalem, and a Messianic kingdom, was that which led them to associate with *this* world the most substantial blessings, to "look for new heavens and a new earth." Their entire religious history had narrowed their horizon, leading them to catch at and covet the earthly image of the good, rather than the very good itself. To such feelings a resurrection of the body, and a restoration at some future period to the upper light of this world, were essential. The fact of a future life was clear, but its times and circumstances were vague, shaped under a fancy clinging closely to this form of existence.

The ease with which the disciples entertained the idea of a speedy second coming of Christ had its explanation in these same tendencies, going out in a new direction. The Messianic kingdom was to them a more spiritual, yet a temporal and visible one. A resurrection, a deferred reunion of the body and spirit, again came in to complete the prevailing bent of thought. The second coming was a rapidly approaching event, and one of an exterior, physical character. This image is present with startling distinctness to St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Thessa-

lonians, chapter iv, 16: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." We see at once how much ruin would have been wrought if conceptions, containing the substance of truth, had been instantly and violently reshaped in exposition to its methods and facts.

When the subject of the resurrection was forced upon Christ by the Sadducees, he affirms the general truth, but with a proof derived from the Old Testament, that tended of itself to a searching reconstruction of the doctrine. The activity of God in his people, hence the perpetual activity of his people in him, is affirmed as a self-evident truth, an early insight into the relation of the soul to God. He lives in them, they live by him, and hence are *perpetually* filled with his life. God *can not* be the God of the dead, but only the God of the living; the intimacy of his relation to his children involves it. This argument would militate against any repose, any suspension of progress in Sheol; it means life and only life.

The declaration of Christ on the cross to the thief by his side, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" settles the question of immediate fellowship with Christ, of instant life in him; and settles it on the basis which every earnest soul covets. The restfulness, it is safe to say the growing restfulness, of St. Paul implies this same expectation. "We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."*

The doctrine of a future life then is brought forward quite aside from the doctrine of a resurrection as a remote

* 2 Cor. v, 8.

terminal event in the world's history, discloses its highest power to the spirit independently of such an issue, and robs that issue, when granted as a fact, of any peculiar religious significance. Such a doctrine stands more and more by itself, an isolated assertion, a supernumerary statement, which the spiritual nature in its hopes is ceasing to appropriate, is leaving behind, finding no place for it in a life instantly renewed and steadily maintained in Christ. Nor is it forced upon us by the Scriptures, if we are content to recognize in them the current, conventional element; to regard the truth as pressed, moulded in its statement by surrounding opinion. The language of our Saviour recurring repeatedly, "And I will raise him up at the last day," retains fully its primary, spiritual import, its promise, its encouragement none the less, nay more, from its conformity to current speech. The mind is not diverted by a new issue, but kept firm in the line of hope, and so of effort.

There is one incident in our Saviour's life remarkable as casting some clear light on this subject of a resurrection. Martha was weighed down by grief at the death of her brother, and the office of consoler fell to Christ. Jesus utters these words of comfort, "Thy brother shall rise again." She, with little penetrative power, understands him to refer to the familiar encouragement of a resurrection, and replies in ready recognition, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." To this Jesus makes answer more decisively, "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?" The response of Martha, a confession of his Messiahship, betrays the vagueness of a mind ready to believe, unable to fully grasp the new hope, and so falling back on familiar

truth. The glorious continuity and strength of life, a life fed from the beginning to the end on the eternal life of Christ, was not a truth near enough to her experience to be laid hold of. Yet this truth remains for us. Christ can no more be stripped of the lives of his servants than of his own life. Death has no power over him or them. The victory is not remote but immediate.

How little on this whole subject we can deal with language, or with the details of imagery, putting them in the place of the truth enforced; how unmistakably we are shut up to the spiritual significance and coherence of events, is well seen by a comparison of these passages of Scripture. "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Christ gave to his disciples the farther proof of a real body, we might almost say a corruptible body, by eating before them. These passages, taken together, would seem to exclude the body of Christ, after the resurrection, from Heaven, and make of it a temporary appearance; and, at the same time, to affirm the likeness of the celestial body to the body of Christ, making his resurrection the ground of our resurrection. "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." The sufficiency of each passage to its own purpose is not doubtful, while the language of them collectively is confusing, if not contradictory. We must walk, we are ever compelled anew to walk, by the counsel of the soul, the insight of the reason, and not by the coherence

of the senses. The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. This deadening power of the letter it may take a longer or a shorter time to develop, but it is sure at length to disclose itself. We can not mine language as if it were an exhaustless vein of thought; our shafts are sinking deeper, and our galleries running farther, into the darkness. We must return to the light, and open new wealth at new localities. Our wisdom in reference to the truth is to accept it as a *guide*, and not to constrain it as we lay hold of it, not to take from it its office under the appearance of installing it in that office. We may drown, by too spasmodic a clutch, both ourselves and him who would save us.

CHAPTER XV.

Lines and Conditions of Progress.

THE religious corollary from the assertion, The Lord reigneth, is, Let the earth rejoice. No inconsiderable portion of the fruit of religious faith is the new, the enlarged relations which we immediately sustain to the world about us, and to the Kingdom of Heaven in it. Each deeper insight into God's government will issue in a new apprehension of his purposes, new joy in them, and a new fellowship of labor with them. We believe that the Lord does reign, and that the earth has therein an ever renewed occasion to rejoice. We wish, therefore, to indicate, as they present themselves to us, some of the conditions and directions of this government.

We stake all on liberty, the dynamics of mind. Nothing can be proved in religion without it, nor without it is any thing as knowledge of any great value. Between

motion and rest, order and disorder, growth and decay, spiritual good and sensual good, real thought and the mere semblance of thought, liberty and necessity, we institute no comparison. The first are worth for us whatever they cost. No price paid on the inferior side can be too great for a gain on the superior. Nor is there any evidence to our mind that these intellectual and spiritual increments can be obtained on essentially easier terms than those granted to us. It is not necessary that we should perfectly understand the government of God ; it is very desirable that we see something of the frame-work of order, its underlying principles of wisdom and grace.

It is objected that God, if we concede his being, must be either less than omnipotent or less than merciful, since omnipotence could create a better world than this, and mercy would prompt its creation. More is ascribed in this view of Mill and others to omnipotence than belongs to it. Omnipotence is simply unlimited power, physical power, the control of physical events. Power is not altered in this, its nature, by being infinite. It can not, therefore, compass a purely intellectual or spiritual end, modify the connections of thought, or the relations of virtue. If we can object to God's government on the earth, we are able to discuss its conditions, and the thing that seems to us should avail as freely in extenuation as in censure. We may, therefore, in this connection legitimately question the notion of omnipotence from which the objection springs, and oppose a better one to it. The activities of God are limited, not by outside difficulties nor inside weakness, but by the insight, the reason, under whose direction they proceed. God can not be rational without accepting the relations incident to reason, without putting power under the limits of wisdom. Power must not exclude wisdom, or the greater is swallowed up in the

less. God is reason, and as reason he is a rigorous law to himself. Purposes, methods, restrictions are involved at once, are the lines of light shot into the darkness, the creative limits showing themselves in the without-form-and-void. So at least we must conceive God's action. To refer holiness to a wish of God, a holy and happy world to a creative fiat, is to destroy holiness, and break down the fundamental distinctions incident to the unfolding of a rational creation, is to merge all attributes, wisdom, grace, right, in power. A solution of this sort in accepting no restrictions admits no order, and in the name of reason destroys reason. The created sinks once more into the uncreated, the rational into the irrational, and the work of God so far, returns to that first point of incipient will in which nothing has been established. Wisdom, righteousness are fundamental in the nature of God, give law to his power, law to the world, law to us. Power is coetaneous with them, but neither supersedes them, nor escapes them. It is not a question of omnipotence and mercy merely whether God shall make a righteous world, but also a question of the nature of righteousness, whether it be something that responds to power, or itself gives law to power. The fundamental conditions of God's activity are those assigned him by his own nature, and he can not get back of these. Virtue must remain virtue, reason reason; each thing must receive and retain a nature, otherwise the brooding spirit is not one of order. Looking, then, upon virtue as something defined by its own character under its own law, and not responsive to mere power; also as so preëminent that its pursuit needs no justification, and its neglect is always censurable, we are merely left with the inquiries, What are the conditions of virtue? and, Does the world seem to supply them in the best attainable form?

Righteousness is conditioned on protracted, intelligent, voluntary action, depositing itself in growth as strength, habit, sentiment, through our physical, intellectual and spiritual constitution. The spirit, as a free spirit, masters itself, establishes and confirms its tendencies, forms active and passive habits, controls its impressions, harmonizes them, and unites its activities to them, making character consistent and firm. Growth, under the existing organization of the world, is divided into two inseparable elements, the individual and the race. Each moral and intellectual problem is primarily dealt with by the individual; he is the only conscious, living point; but the permanent organic products of growth begin at once to be stored up in and transmitted by the race. These products show themselves in new external conditions of civilization, in modified internal physical powers and tendencies, in an intellectual inheritance of ideas, in ethical principles and sentiments wrought into institutions and customs. The individual initiates the movement, makes the invention, discovers the truth, forms the habit, enforces the principle, and passes it by physical and intellectual transfer over to the community; the community holds it fast, and passes it, with its other possessions, by physical and spiritual descent to posterity. The community is the conservative core and frame-work of growth, the centre of accretion from century to century. The ultimate unity, the largest dependence of men, are in the race, though they are united to it through many intervening ramifications, of the family, the tribe, the nation. The complete growth of the individual is conditioned on the perfection of each organization of which he is a constituent, up to the most comprehensive one; as the bud of the tree through twig and branch and limb is united to the trunk, and assigned its position and vigor by them all.

The organizing, living forces all go forth from the

individual, all centre and reappear in him, finding expression in his physical forces, intellectual affinities, spiritual affections. So the household is organized, so the nation, and so the household of nations, and with each enlargement the impulses developed are more generous, more just, more spiritual. The vigor of the individual life and the breadth of the organization are commensurate. As physical elevation is given the bud of the tree chiefly by the trunk and the branch of which it is a part, so moral elevation is imparted to the individual primarily by the social combination of which he is a member. Sympathetic, self-sacrificing benevolence, a universal law of love, a rule of righteousness, must include the whole human family. It is in the action and reaction between the whole and its parts, between nations and nations, continents and continents, that the Christian sentiment most vigorously expresses itself. Its primary precept becomes, "Go ye and teach all nations." The spirit of the cross of Christ, the spirit of self-sacrifice, one for all and so all for each, is, as few even yet conceive it to be, the law of salvation. The individual can not in growth dispense with this grand aggregate, this universal ministration, this coming in of varied enlarged life from all quarters of our spiritual realm ; he can not win the legitimate tributaries of his life till he bows every feeling and purpose to the broadest law, the most beneficent and divine sentiment. That which offers itself as self-sacrifice is in fact self-nourishment, so thoroughly organic is man with man in society. The world is the field of our present spiritual activities, and in turn must owe its unity to these our broadest, best tendencies. Whether, therefore, we will have such sweeping dependencies is simply whether we will have spiritual development, will make room for the interplay of our largest life. As the tree does not put forth its flower-buds and

fruit-buds at once, nor mature them till much of its growth has been made, so we can not yield spiritual fruits till these enlarged, centralized influences come home to us. It is not the combination that begets the feeling, but the feeling which occasions the combination, the two sustaining each other. Missionary labor, if it were far less successful than it now is, would still be the most auspicious omen of good ; the coming to the light and creeping abroad of our spiritual, our race, affinities, affinities which belong to the nations of the earth as all of one blood, and capable of entering into one household of faith.

We shall not understand, or rather begin to understand, God's government without a vision of righteousness, nor apprehend righteousness except as we discover it to be the product of growth; nor growth save as it discloses its two elements ; its vast command of resources, its exhaustless powers of accumulation, its increasing ease of transmission ; and also the intimate, narrow, private way in which it searches out every mind, establishes itself in every willing soul, brings to it wealth and adds by it, in passing, one more increment to the general power. Growth then holds largely the secrets of divine wisdom and divine government. Light is thus cast upon the terrible liabilities incident to these broad, delicate connections of constant inter-communication and onward flow. The rankling virus will penetrate the living body as it can not the dead one ; but we must not object to the living body that it is alive. It is an inseparable condition of interplay, beyond which we can not carry our objections,—unable as we are to replace this inherent reason and fitness of things which we thereby destroy—that it may be an interplay of evil as well as of good. Moral good remains good only by a contrast with moral evil, and a choice directed toward it for what it is. Light is not light unless its displacement

produces darkness. The entail of sin, mischievous as it may be, is corrective, is the weight that lifts and holds before us in counterpoise the bright signal, indicating the ways of safety. Virtue is not a physical good to be given and enjoyed ; it involves the knowledge of good and evil. We feed on this tree first, and so on that of life. Liabilities that we know not how to dispense with, can not be objected to any one method, since they must attend on all methods. These distinctions and contrasts we believe to be incident to reason, as they are that by which reason proceeds in its work, that which it instantly ordains, and builds its purposes upon ; but if they are merely impressed upon us by our experience, we can not transcend them. Ultimate nature we believe to be the nature of reason, the nature of mind, the nature of God, imposing itself as a law upon things ; but if we are mistaken in this, and the ultimate nature is a nature of things, there is in this fact no infringement on power, as physical power, or of mercy, in God. What power can affect is not an ultimate nature, but changes within that nature, and infinite power can not be called on to do things which do not belong to power to do. What has not been made and can not be unmade is irrelevant to power.

We must insist on requiring of power only what is within the scope of power, and objections which abolish all distinctions abolish also themselves. If God is right or wrong in doing or not doing this or that, then right or wrong is not power or the product of power or to be reached by power, but the intangible law that lies far above power. When, therefore, we object to God's government, we recognize those immutable distinctions of reason within which and under which power is expended, and is impotent to alter. We are ready to grant that larger capacities, quicker faculties might have been given to man ; but not

that virtue, intelligence, experience, any product of growth could have been directly conferred. It may be objected to the government of God that man is too feebly endowed, started too low in the career of growth; it can not be objected that he was in the beginning destitute of the organized strength, the readjustments, the acquired tendencies, the ease and safety of action, he has now won or shall hereafter win. These are all conditioned on something deeper than power. Would then the possession of nimbler powers, more active and vigorous faculties, give the race safer, better conditions of growth? There are considerations which go to show that it would not. The more decided the faculties the more intense is their action, and the more critical and dangerous is their trial. The experiment of discernment, obedience and harmony is carried forward with more heat, and its failure is more rapid and complete. Dullness of faculty and deadness to the moral conflict keep the issue somewhat in the back-ground, prevent a premature and disastrous solution, and allow favoring conditions to accumulate slowly here and there, and to initiate the activities of growth. Nothing is precipitated. The disasters of restricted powers can not be so great, so deadly within the soul, nor so repulsive externally, nor so universal. Opportunities renew themselves more readily, purely animal impulses sustain the spirit, cover up its failures, subdue moral features, and gather about the least incipient virtue,—courage, patience, or industry—as a single seed in the soil, and nourish it into strength.

Enlarged powers, quickness of action, when not sustained by experience, give more strength to incentives, temptations than to restraints, safe-guards. This is inevitable. The appetite, the desire come first, the correctives are developed slowly under prolonged and varied action. Brilliant faculties first reflect the heat of passions and

quicken the impulses ; not till later are they ready with calmer, broader, wiser views to moderate the hopes, assuage the desires, and redirect the purposes. Experience, on the present grade of human powers, shows us constantly the dangers which attend on any unusual gifts. Moreover, any considerable gap between man and the brute creation, the animal nature on which his spiritual nature is engrafted, is, in the earlier stages of growth, unfortunate. An intellectual nature pressed down close to the instincts of the brute ; sustained by its wholesome, balanced, physical actions ; hard pushed by its urgent, hourly appetites, makes a safer start than one more free, and hence less guided. Breaks are no more favorable in the intellectual than in the physical kingdom. The tendency established below completes itself above. The higher is so united to the lower, so nourished by it, is in such relations of reciprocal interdependence, that an advance at one point must be tempered by like advances at many points. Man's spiritual constitution is, by virtue of its physical dependencies, and by virtue of the field of its activities, organized into and out of the animal creation. The body must fortify the mind, and the victories of the mind must record themselves in the physical system, and sustain themselves by its modified functions. Virtue is defenceless, wages a losing warfare, till it has learned to entrench itself in the soil, and win to itself as subjects natural forces. To do this it must take the physical world into its keeping by continuous growth. One discipline now trains man and beast, the body of man and the mind of man. A gradation of faculties unite the dog and his master, the horse and his rider. Along the narrow paths of instinct, automatic action, brute intelligence and natural affections come impulses from below which soften, restrain and quicken human nature, as it assays its own higher

fields. Larger intellectual powers would only serve to make devils of men, if less restrained by minor wants, minor sympathies, and less dependent on the instinctive, firm, disciplined forces of nature. There is much reason to believe that the trial of our moral strength would be much more critical, and might be far more disastrous, if our intellectual powers were sensibly increased, without being fortified by virtuous habit, and transmitted strength ; if we could be divorced from that below us, having as yet won no hold on that above us.

At all events this is a question of degrees, and, where-soever we place the limits of endowment, leaves us with the query, Why not farther on ? It satisfies us to know, that the deep, strong roots of our animal, our semi-physical, nature are a constant support to our spiritual powers, and when these seem prostrate by the storms, afford our best hope that they will spring up again.

It is also objected that the sufferings incident to our present discipline are great and pervasive. Are they unnecessarily great ? The need must be defined by the ends in view, primarily by the moral ends. These incentives to effort do not seem to us too great, when we consider the material, the misinclined and disinclined nature they have to deal with. Man himself, in his crimes and cruelties, strikes a sharper note of woe by far than any refrain that comes up from the inferior world. The accentuation of grief lies almost wholly in voluntary action. That the motives to effort are not more cogent than man requires is a matter of observation. The temperate zones, the lines of medium hardship, on the whole give the best conditions of progress. The incentives to civilization are less in more lenient than in more rugged climates. The growth of nations has again and again been arrested by luxury, that is by an accumulation of easy conditions

beyond the grade of virtue that accompanies them, even though these advantages have been won, grown into, not given. A second generation to whom wealth comes without exertion is as often as otherwise injured by it. A milder physical *régime* than that prevalent in the world, must at once be supported by unusually considerate and cogent moral influences, or it miscarries. As far as man is concerned there can hardly be to advantage, a serious reduction of suffering, save as it is the result of his voluntary improvement.

But pain is not confined to man, it pervades the world everywhere, reaching deeper into the organic system and farther back in time than his eye can follow it. There can be no doubt, that looking at the sufferings of the animal kingdom, first through the medium of high spiritual sensibilities, and second through that of the most perfected nervous system, we greatly exaggerate them. Letting this fact go for what it may, it is plain that the fortunes of the world must be the fortunes of its chief actor, that it can find no other concord than in man. Its independent strifes and griefs only put it in harmony with him. Certainly no discord could be more painful than that of a world with a higher quality of mercy than ours subject to the caprice and cruelty of man. It is on this side rather than on the opposite that a want of fitness is oftenest felt. Nothing could be more unreasonable than to detach man from the conditions about him. His education, physical, intellectual and moral, is in the ties of interest and sympathy which bind him to the nature below him, which render him able to use it and abuse it, to mar it and to mend it. The whole creation must groan and travail together in pain. It is a very superficial view of the moral problem which would find any relief in divorcing a part from the fortunes of the whole, or make the connection of events less

extended than they tend to be. It is our human finiteness, contemplating things by parts and working piecemeal, which leads us to resent the deeply implicated and broad activities of the government of God.

Another objection, urged even by such men as Mill, is directed against the justice of God. Justice, as many understand it, a piece of mechanism transferred to the moral world, a tooth-for-a-tooth principle, a formal adjustment of rewards and punishments to actions, plays a very limited part in the divine scheme. It enters our human governments on their blind, feeble side ; it deals with the outside relations more than with the substance of conduct, its appearances rather than its spirit, the same action bringing much the same punishment, though the guilt of it ranges at large along the moral scale. If God, searching the heart, were to direct his omnipotence to an exact meting out of rewards, we, ignorant of the premises, would be still more dissatisfied with the results. Nothing certainly could be more destructive of all high morality, all self-sacrifice and faith than the hand-to-mouth motives incident to a nicely administered system of rewards and punishments. If there is any one preëminent excellence in the moral government, it is this rejection of justice, so called. Justice, taking instant cognizance of every action, would destroy all patience, all enthusiasm, all hardihood of virtue, and reduce us to day-laborers, returning at night each with his money in his pocket, and ready to complain, like those of the parable, if a fellow, servant had received the least gift beyond the regular stipend. A system in this way exactly right becomes one exactly wrong, and would reduce action to the most unendurable eye-service. Public charities, with well-advised and evenly yet mechanically administered rules, may, when applied to children, issue in the most sluggish, intractable, wooden characters. It has

been found better, in the charity schools of London, to send children home at night, even to the most wretched abodes, that they may there give and gather some human sympathy, some patience, some personal discipline, than to retain them constantly under a merely mechanical rule. Family dependences sadly miscarry, yet with all their passion, hardships and injustice, they rarely so miscarry that they are not better than the formal precision of a system. Life, infantile life, must be nourished on a human breast of some sort, and drawn close to some human heart. Exact justice is no part of a disciplinary system, is impossible of introduction, or if introduced would be most disastrous. It is a dead, inflexible rule ; not a living, variable, sympathetic, quickening force. In the restricted meaning God's method is not just, and we are thankful that it is not ; in the large sense of the word, as dealing kindly, considerately, wisely with living impulses, as furnishing conditions of growth, we believe it to be just. At no point is the absence of what some would call justice, fairness, equality of opportunity more manifest than in the positions which fall by birth to men. A heavy entail of sin and disaster may descend on a child, a generation, giving the most untoward conditions and the most disproportionate burdens. Nothing could occur in more complete oversight of an equal division of advantages. Yet, on this law of descent, this organized transfer of power, turns the possibility of growth. The individual divorced from the community, and his inheritance under it, is a mere waif. The cardinal conditions of growth are provided for, conditions in which all are alike interested, and each must meet the liabilities incident thereto. Any man may rightly be called on to die for the state, though all do not die for it ; nay, that all may not die for it. It is better that it

should be so ; thus it is that selfishness and sin are especially worsted in the conflict.

Explaining, then, all things by growth, finding our lines of insight along its directions, we wish to mark some of the laws incident to spiritual development. Kindred and supplementary truths have an order of enforcement which makes every stage partial, preparatory in reference to subsequent ones ; as truly so in religion as in science. This fact we will illustrate in several directions. The relatively ultimate truth is that God is equally present everywhere, and can be approached alike by all. Not till this fact is understood and rejoiced in, can the religious life achieve its true freedom and universality. Yet, in rude periods, a tendency the reverse of this truth is present for two reasons. Languid faith, not being able to lay hold of the omnipresence of God, is strengthened by a sense of peculiar manifestations at special times and places. Moreover, till a true reverence is well established, a local worship must be maintained, with a priesthood and system of interventions guarding the veneration and devotion of the devotee, and rebuking the neglect of the irreligious. Holy places and duties must be withheld from that profane access which to the vulgar degrade them. The real relation of man to God can only be reached on its own level by these intervening partial methods.

So also the power of God needs to be firmly established in men's minds before they can be entrusted with his goodness. Goodness is easily associated with weakness, and readily degenerates into good nature. It can only have its appropriate effect when it is supported by a sense of the most independent power. In the same way the holiness of God must in disclosure precede his grace. Forgiveness loses its regenerative impulse unless it is accompanied by the most complete moral discrimination, maintains the

firmest hold on the standard of duty, and concedes what it concedes in favor of that standard, that the forgiven one may the more easily find his way back to it. In keeping with these partial views which the mind necessarily takes of the character of God, establishing it first on one side and then on another, Abraham and Moses expostulate with God as a ruler, and seem more tender than he toward the disobedient.

It was in favor of the omnipotence of God, the strength of his government, urged on a nation too easily forgetful of it, that the prophet employed the fearfully vigorous and limited language, "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war ; he shall cry, yea roar ; he shall prevail against his enemies."

For a like reason it is that the decrees of God, his intervening grace, are first urged on the church, before the liberty and responsibility of men are fully enforced. In dark and discouraging periods men do not so much desire a fresh presentation of their own powers as of the power of God ; do not so much covet a human method as a divine method in which to trust. They wish to feel the work to be God's, the issue his, the manner his in some supreme, overruling way. They magnify his presence on the supernatural side, and so secure a cloud and a flame to rest on their tabernacle, and go before it. This is a healthy tendency, for thus do they then best develop their hopes and efforts. "Pelagianism was the less inspiring and edifying doctrine, and the sense of being in the divine hand was the feeling which it was good for Christians to be filled with."*

Yet there comes a time when moral forces are more thoroughly operative, when God's presence is found in them, and personal judgment and responsibility need to

* Paul and Protestantism, p. 164.

be quickened under them, and the human elements taken up in an active not a passive way into the divine government. Augustinianism and Calvinism must now give ground, retire to their own limits, and lose perhaps even a portion of them.

It is inevitable in the beginning that men should think the chief difficulty to be in their circumstances, their external surroundings, and not in themselves ; that they should look forward therefore to a Kingdom of Heaven offering new conditions of happiness, and have their attention directed to its attainment, rather than to the correction of their own desires. Rewards and punishments would be the chief incentives to action so long as the attention was directed outward, and these would be gathered together on either hand in heaven and hell, with physical representations which to later periods might seem repulsive in their vividness, at war with the more pure, sympathetic, spiritual movement on which the thoughts of men were entering. The dark clouds of wrath which lie low in the morning may be drunk up at mid-day by the cheerful, warm light of love, and that too with no loss to the vigorous, ruling forces present. Governments, first of power, then of power and wisdom, then of grace, gathering us up in a free, living way, and planting within our own spirits the fountains of youth and hope, these are the spiritual transitions which Christian experience necessarily makes. Yet government true and strong must survive in them all ; if this notion is let slip, the whole process miscarries. Coincident with this change is that in the spirit of the obedience rendered. It starts with a quick adhesion yielded to the letter of the law ; it ends with an exhaustive, ever-returning inquiry into its spirit. In the beginning the mind dares not to be free, in the end it dares not to be otherwise than free, since so alone can it be faithful. A like change takes place also

in the conditions of union. Men are first coerced into order, as soldiers in an army, with an arbitrary *status*; later they fall into order, as citizens in a community, by virtue of each seeking his own. Christians come to understand that there is more harmony in cheerfully conceded diversities than in constrained uniformities.

Nor are we able to feel that sin can be freely forgiven so long as God's government maintains its external cast; is a sort of criminal procedure; but when it comes to be corrective, incorporate, constitutional, then we see that forgiveness extended to real repentance is cleansing, saving, blessed; that God can no more withhold it than man can dispense with it; that with both it is a moral necessity, not a mere volition. We must tarry in the truth that is nearest our experience and so pass to the next. God does not forgive sin, God can not but forgive sin, are both assertions true to different states of mind, and under different lights; yet the second is much the more profound statement.

There is one other general order in growth which should be stated more fully—our apprehension of the natural and supernatural. Men start with theories, suggestions, taken from their own experience. They believe in their own freedom, and with it spiritual beings and interventions find easy admission. The world is explained in a grossly anthropomorphic way. There is no proper supernatural, for there is no proper natural; the two are blended confusedly. It is an era of superstitions in religion, and of remote, fanciful explanations in science. The soul as personal yearns for the personal, and finds it everywhere. The sympathies claim their own, and quite displace the thoughts.

Then necessarily in progress comes a second movement. The mind is thrown outward in more honest

inquiry. Laws are discovered, enlarged ; establish in thought a new tendency, and lead to new estimates. Settled conviction springs up, and this gains coherence each year ; the scientific, the cosmic spirit is born, and matures in conflict with that of faith. We have the natural, but the supernatural is escaping us.

Is this the end? Certainly not. No second movement can assure itself of correctness by the entire displacement of an earlier one. If the first was wholly wrong, the second is probably no better. It in turn shall exhaust itself, and give way to a third, equally futile. The second can establish its own value, and make way for the third, only on the ground that it has included the first, or is ready in passing to an advanced position to unite with it. Science is of the utmost value, if it supplements philosophy ; missing this it misses its own ministration. If science destroys philosophy our losses are equal to our gains, and, what is far worse, our intellectual life is becoming suicidal, is disclosing itself as a change of ruling impressions none of which are valid. Natural law is, in reference to God, an unfolding to us of his wisdom and power. Only thus does the Infinite spread out his thought, and put it within the reach of the finite. Here is wisdom made for man distinct, visible, manageable. But if at the same time impersonal forces as impersonal are allowed to crowd back intelligence, to exclude personality, to render choice an incongruity, then, while finite facts are gained, the comprehending thought, the animating life are lost. While the outlines of wisdom seem to be won, wisdom itself is disappearing. We have the volume, but the characters in which it is written have lost their suggestiveness. We have miscarried at our second lesson, and while heeding the word, it has suddenly ceased to be the Word of God.

We must pause here or be remanded again to our first discipline.

So on the side of man, a knowledge of nature and of her laws is the winning of power, is taking events from the region of will, as an undefined, variable force, and putting them in the realm of law, of settled, manageable agents. Here are exhaustless gains. Every thing may now be done. Inquiry, counsel, work are in order henceforth. Yet this gain is an illusion unless man retains his own personal power, unless he *can* think, devise, determine. If these acts are only a process within a process, parts of necessary forces; or rather the empty, shadowy symbols which in consciousness attend on the physical agencies involved, then this second movement has missed its gains in laying hold of them, and far from finding for man new powers, has lost his old powers. It has made the discovery that the world of mind, whatever that world may be, lies to one side of the efficient, physical forces which construct, guide and control the world of matter, and only rehearses, in a second-hand, inefficacious way, the action of agencies whose strength rests exclusively in material facts. It is the molecular, nervous changes which condition thought, and, what is far more, condition the next physical step in the series of changes, and these alone therefore that are of real interest. This second stage in knowledge is of no avail unless we sustain it by what was contained in the first stage. Nature without the supernatural overpowers the soul by the excess of law, as much as the supernatural without the natural overpowers it by the absence of law, of fixed conditions of action.

A partial, anthropomorphic movement is one of confusion, in which the two terms of rational life, the necessary and the free, causation and spontaneity, are confusedly blended, the second encroaching on the first apparently to

magnify its own power, but really to subvert it. The cosmic tendency, as an excessive one, does not so much confound the two fields as strenuously assert the existence of the one, and as strenuously deny that of the other. There must come a third effort in which science and philosophy shall cordially unite, shall strive to enclose between them the territory of knowledge, to recognize its partite character and divided law, and to complete the sphere of life by giving it its opposed hemispheres. So shall we reach a higher unity, shall see that the natural calls for the supernatural, the supernatural for the natural ; and that while neither is lost in the other, they blend with each other in constant support and ministration. The natural expresses the supernatural, and the supernatural gives to the natural its value and suggestive power. Either perishes by itself ; together they abide, the noumena and phenomena of one synthetic, living system ; a universe with a soul in it.

We return to the two elements in growth, the race and the individual. The individual best represents the supernatural element,—let us remember that the supernatural is never wholly supernatural, but is always at work in the midst of nature, acting on it and acted on by it—and the race the natural element. The race, in its physical forces, its possessions, institutions, tendencies, stock, is something done, is ground gained, reliable, permanent forces put at the disposal of all. The individual, while resting back on these incorporate, organic agencies, and largely controlled by them, may yet add something to them, may bend them to his own work, may act on them as well as with them, his own feet touching the ground in the sweeping current by virtue of his individuality.

The grand depository of growth, the store-house of its increasing and inexhaustible winnings, is the race. Moral

growth involves the highest law operative in the largest, hence the entire, field, and so includes all growth. It includes physical growth, that is, a physical organism established with transmissible forces, blood-currents in which health, strength, the needful conditions and needful instruments of virtue are lodged by sire and son for themselves and for all. It includes that material growth also by which the powers of nature either yield themselves to our service, or soften themselves to our safety; by which the burdens, the grievous ones of life, are shifted from sensitive to insensate shoulders, where they may rest unwearyingly. It includes intellectual growth, that involved in the mastery of nature, and that which gives the spirit the yet better mastery of itself, freedom, alertness, vigor and grace of movement, all we are learning to cover by the word culture. It includes that religious growth by which these conditions are made to minister to the affections, enrich and purify the heart, deepen, cleanse and spiritualize its emotions, and send them out, like the streams of Eden, parting to the four quarters, for the refreshment of every goodly thing.

When we remember that in this race-growth all, absolutely all, must be included; that the moral sympathies, the spiritual life will no more suffer gaps in its organic action, omission in its collated material, than the physical life; that its gains must be incorporated slowly by inheritance and for inheritance into the physical forces of the world; that a thousand actions and reactions, modifications and reconstructions are to set in; that retrogression, retardation and powers prematurely spent may also intervene; that the movement itself, in every stage of it, is dynamic, passing on to something larger and fuller, we see how remote in its large sense is the Kingdom of Heaven, how close it is to us, how constantly coming as a pervasive

presence, how many in how many ways are taking part in it, and how the natural, the complete, the established grow out of the supernatural, the incomplete, the transitional, the first ministering to and living in those living points of growth expressed by the second.

Thy kingdom come is a prayer we shall not soon exhaust. It covers all effort, and makes for progress in all directions. No civilizing agency, nothing which puts man in better possession of the world, of society, of himself; that enters as an agent of relief, of furtherance, of harmony, fails to become an element in that kingdom.

The enunciation and enforcing of truths of society and government, of moral precepts and religious principles; their establishment and incorporation into the constitution of man and society in a possession of the present and hereditary hold on the future, have given opportunity for the most diverse civilizations and religions, in one place and another, to take a valuable part in this race-growth, and to become integral with it. Every state and truth are transitional, and are to be judged by those which precede and those which follow them. If they have enlarged antecedent forces, and made way for subsequent ones yet more enlarged, they have helped to bring one or another portion of the race into a solid, marching column. There is in this no abatement of the value of the truths of Christianity, but the reverse rather. It is these that are showing themselves able to consolidate the human family, and put it, nation by nation, branch by branch, in living coöperation under conditions of growing integration—of a purified and spiritualized union. To use, work, and carry on the living conditions at any time present is far more than to reject them, and remand the race to a new beginning. That which includes the most out of the past heads the march to the future.

The religious hierarchies of the world have owed their influence to moral and religious ideas, to spiritual tendencies, blind and feeble though they may have been, and to superior intelligence. They have been, therefore, means of restraint and of progress. They have taken part, like other instrumentalities, and among the best and most vigorous of them, in the solution of the spiritual problems of their times. It is as much a mistake to speak with wholesale censure against the priesthood of the present and past as against the rulers and governments of men. Both have been tempered down to the low condition of society out of which they have arisen; both have been tyrannical, and often been found, Apollyon-like, with threatening darts astride the path of progress; yet both have been the central and indispensable condition of existing order, have disclosed the value of order, and have led, even when unwilling to accept it, to the proximate, pregnant idea in the line of growth. We are to bear in mind that governments, ecclesiastical and civil, face backward rather than forward. They show their benign influences in reference to the things which precede them. They, in the beginning, gather up, knit together and enlarge some just tendencies, some organizing influences, and become, like the oracles and priesthood of Greece, an "effective, guiding and systematizing influence without which the history of the nation can not be understood."* "They were possessed of the capacity and mission of becoming in the name of their God, the teachers and counselors, in all matters, of the children of the land."†

To subsequent ages, however, a priesthood readily presents an appearance the reverse of its earlier one. Like all tendencies in society, or in government, or in science even, the religious tendency, beneficent in the out-

* Curtius' History of Greece, vol. ii, p. 18. † Ibid, p. 16.

set and in much of its career, is likely to consolidate itself, lose fluency, and refuse to submit to the farther changes incident to growth. Hence religions disappear in darkness, as governments go down in tyranny ; the day closes in storms.

We ought not to be misled by this fact. The religious training of a period, be it less or more, is the work of a priesthood. By means of it some foundation of ideas is reached which prepares the way for further work ; and more frequently than otherwise the new truths are pushed forward by a portion of the priesthood itself. They at all events furnish the point of departure, the line of divergence. The selfish, sluggish, conservatory tendencies of religion are incident to human nature, and can no more be objected to priesthoods as a specific characteristic than an inclination to misapply power can be ascribed to rulers. The *savants* of science, with whom outside motives are reduced to their minimum, often get in the way of progress by virtue of the inertness of age, yet in such men alone lie the energies of growth, and from them spring the remedial agencies. No development can be denied its instruments. We forget that a priesthood is constituent with the period to which it belongs, and shares its limitations. Growth is not an absolute but a relative good ; it has its embarrassments, miscarriages and retreats, and yet stands justified in all its necessary agencies. The method is admissible, while censure falls freely on those who take part in it.

In religion, as in philosophy, or as in law, every thing is changing, and each position, person, institution is to be judged by what has been, by what is, by what is struggling to be. Fluency, an easy power of change, must always be looked for in the individual, the seat of variety and growth ; permanence, resistance, the power to hold what is won must be sought in institutions, hierarchies, hereditary race-

forces. In the rhythm of growth these are alternately uppermost, and beneficent or excessive according to the conditions transpiring. Time must be given to transmute the individual idea, the incipient, living impulse, into race-power, organic structure, hereditary force ; and this hereditary tendency, once in possession of its own, must be struggled with lest it exclude the next step. Individual power is ever returning afresh in a rapid succession of generations, to impress itself on the organic, continuous race-element ; and this, on the whole, in spite of its stubborn resistance, is not unnecessarily firm, when we consider that we commit to it, as the architect to the stone, all our labor. We quite assent to the assertion of Mommsen, if it is interpreted with the wisdom with which it was made. "The highest revelations of humanity are perishable ; the religion once true may become a lie ; the polity once fraught with blessings may become a curse ; but even the gospel that is past still finds confessors, and if such a faith can not remove mountains like a faith in the living truth, it yet remains true to itself down to its very end, and does not depart from the realm of the living till it has dragged its last priest and last partisans along with it, and a new generation, freed from those shadows of the past and the perishing, rules over a world that has renewed its youth."* We must remember that this new generation holds past truth as an organic, constitutional power, "an unconscious cerebration," and so possessing it, can well enough have a free, fresh consciousness for its own discussions.

It is folly then to rail against religion as an alien element opposed to progress, when in fact it has been thrown up along the lines of development by the very forces at work. It is indeed possible that there should be a partial

* History of Rome, vol. iv, p. 501.

conflict between one tendency and another, between religion and science ; but it is a fact attributable exclusively to neither of the two parties, but to the more profound embarrassment that men and society are ignorant, sluggish, stubborn, and hence movement in this medium of resistance is forced into a zigzag. Among priests, rulers, scientists are included the worst as well as the best of the phases of human temper.

We find also in this relation of the individual and the race a solution of the question of unity in religious action. A unity that is external and coercive, that represses thought and narrows effort, is mischievous ; a unity that is free, organizing, harmonizing is the last and highest product of growth. So long as schism, sects are requisite to the due activity and specialization of individual powers, it is better that they should, with all their evils, exist. When any church organization can hold personal activity without discouraging or curbing it ; when the liberty allowed is not that of indifference,—in some respects more repressive than constraint—but comes with a proper estimate of its value, and a desire to appropriate and develop its advantages, then union is organization, and has all the worth of growth. Though these words are figurative, and by no means self-explanatory in any given set of circumstances, they may, none the less, direct our inquiry ; a consolidation is good which unites and organizes activities without an arrest of their tendency to specialization. Specialization is the primary movement, and justly breaks away from any combining force that checks it, either by violence or inertness. Our own civil government is a fortunate construction, because it strives, in a living, vigorous way, to unite without smothering the activities incident to a divided development. The English Church, if it can gather in dissenters without repressing their powers, the

adaptations, incident to each denomination ; if it can combine diverse developments, just tendencies, and make them serviceable in a single, vigorous, varied church polity, doubtless has the claims on the conscience which an earnest advocate, like Matthew Arnold, thinks it to possess. Hitherto, however, to restrain dissent would have been as a rule to check specialization, restrict thought, repress power ; would have been, therefore, to secure a dead unity in place of dividing and enlarging life. The tendency is to seek after premature, artificial, extended organization. A real unity is one of the last things to be reached, and one of the easiest when its conditions are ready. It is a result incident to progress, rather than the aim of progress.

We see, then, if not perfectly, yet with some insight, that there is a government of God in the world by growth ; that the conditions of growth, if not in their present and previous features visibly the very best, are so excellent as to preclude on our part, in view of all the liabilities of change, a well-grounded assertion of defect ; that these conditions are subject to the perversion and misuse which are incident to sin ; that they easily improve, gaining great momentum for good under skillful, faithful development ; that the one difficulty which turns admirable opportunities into formidable difficulties is the evilly disposed will of man ; and that the one harmonizing and light-giving process in the spiritual as united with the physical universe and ministered to by it is growth, growth hinging on the free unfolding of human powers under conditions steadily forced back to the line of ministration, and never for an instant allowed to usurp the field.

This growth is a moral growth, and implies a deep-seated moral government, one resting on the primary impulse of love. This is made plain by the fact, that the

secondary conditions of progress come to speedy arrest unless society, by a coördinate moral development, is organized through and through on principles, first of rightfulness, later of mutual respect, and last of spiritual affection. Let a line be run anywhere in society, at any stage of development, the life on either side of which is morally divided in opportunities and discipline, and it will show itself a line of conflict, of disorganization, of arrest and overthrow. Along this line will be begotten malign sentiments, passionate prejudices, cruel tyrannies, which, scattering as seeds of mischief either way, will abide their time to spring up, a harvest of overshadowing evil. It will be a path for the thunderbolts of war to travel, once in the air under the heat of anger. There is then a government, one which gains light and force as it proceeds, a free government, announcing as its ultimate principle of union, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and its ultimate symbol, the cross of Christ, the cross of sacrifice. That the poor have the Gospel preached to them is the primary proof of the Christian faith, and no faith can organize growth that can not pass freely in its interchange of activities, opportunities, affectionate ministrations every line, and unite in one all things.

If we were to contrast science and religion as redemptive agencies, it would be at this point. However extendedly science may furnish the means of benevolence, it can not give its motives. There is no reason why the scientist should be more benevolent than another, better able than another to conquer the discords of society, and unite in life within itself this rational kingdom, save as he sees more clearly and feels more strongly the force of a moral government, and of spiritual incentives. To his own soul is instantly transferred the conflict involved in continuous social growth; it passes from the scientific, the abstract, to

the spiritual, the sympathetic thoughts, and there is settled. Having won the living impulse, he goes back to science for the means of making it effective. Religion must lead, that is use, science ; science can not lead, that is use, religion. Religion perishes under science, science thrives under religion, true religion. There is but one basis for union.

Yet there is a sense in which science leads religion. The religious impulse must look to science to guide it in reaching its ends. Every law of nature, of the mind and of society, gives new conditions to religious activity, to that wise, faithful effort by which perfect mastery and perfect possession are obtained. Not only must science devote itself to the service of religion, religion must submit itself to science in defining and reaching its own ends. Only so is it religion, obedient to the laws of God.

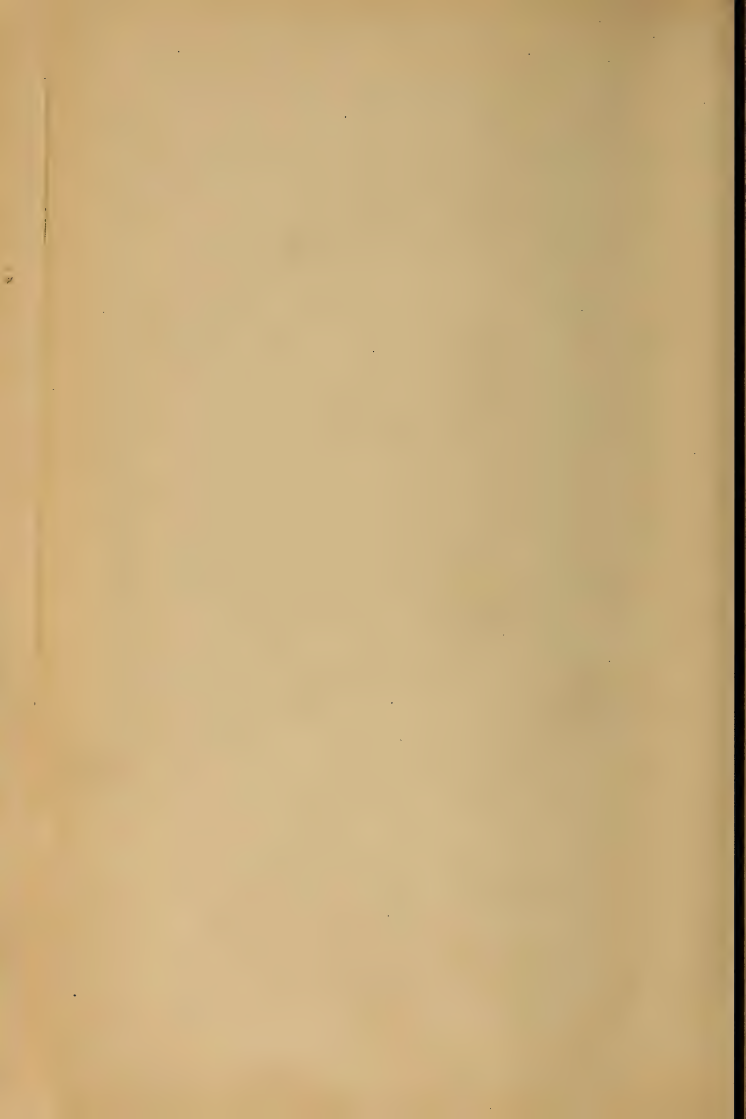
When we clearly understand that the individual can not reach perfection without the perfection of society in its entire membership, the grander organization of which each man is a constituent ; that society can only perceive or secure its ends by successive stages, as the conditions of virtue are wrought into it as hereditary strength, and the world brought into general and easy subjection ; and that this physical mastery must itself be proportionate to the intelligence and virtue from which it springs, it becomes plain that the Kingdom of Heaven is yet remote, that nature and society are working slowly toward it under the guidance and force of individual lives. Society is a grand aggregate, the universe a wonderful instrument, a mechanism whose momentum is something terrible ; yet neither overshadows man, as both ultimately yield to him, and in the form and measure of their ministration grow up with and under his free powers. Nor is man, the single man, left narrow, finite, partial in his growth ; he remains an

organic constituent fed by every force in nature and every power in the spiritual world, all struggling together to round out and fill full this his being. The road along which the race is led, even in its earthly journeying, is a long ascending one, a glorious one, and may well stand in connection and interchangeable sympathy with an immortal life. Indeed, as we contemplate this march upward of the human spirit into light, ushered and attended by all the expanding powers of nature, gathering and combining multitudes that no eye can measure, we can have but one feeling concerning it, that it is the consummate wisdom of God which so unites matter to mind; and lifts both into and links them with his spiritual kingdom; that this visible, gala procession enters the courts of a temple ample enough for all its unfolding and worship.

Nor is the end near. We are in the first stages of intellectual growth, with a merely incipient, spiritual movement. The enthusiasm of love, of the Kingdom of Heaven, takes but partial possession of a few minds. The pulse beats with the fever of acquisition, of action, of knowledge, of nature to be subdued to service, and only rarely is quickened with redemptive love, that, throbbing in sympathetic life-stroke with the heart of Christ, yearns over the race of men. Last shall come man in the image of God, and that which all along had been good, shall become very good; the spiritual passing to its preëminence, love straitened at no point in its service.

“This fine old world of ours is but a child
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time
To learn its limbs; there is a hand that guides.”

THE END.







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